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Introduction: Kongo Atlantic Dialogues

ROBIN POYNOR, SUSAN COOKSEY and CARLEE FORBES

Introduction

Articles in this issue that relate to the Kikongo speaking peoples of Central Africa and the Kongo diaspora to North America and South America are derived from papers presented at the annual Gwendolen M. Carter lectures sponsored by the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida. The Carter series is designed to offer the university community and the greater public the perspectives of Africanist scholars on issues of pressing importance to the peoples and societies of Africa.¹ The topic for the 2014 conference was “Kongo Atlantic Dialogues: Kongo Culture in Central Africa and in the Americas.” Susan Cooksey and Robin Poynor proposed the conference topic, and together with Hein Vanhee of the Royal Museum for Central Africa, assisted by graduate student Carlee Forbes, invited some thirty speakers and discussants to address issues of the Kingdom of Kongo, the related Kongo peoples, and aspects of diaspora culture in the Caribbean, South America, and North America that can be related to those Central African peoples. The inspiration for the conference was the *Kongo across the Waters* exhibition, a collaboration of the Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida and the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium, and the book of the same title.²

The exhibition, the book, and the conference addressed a period of some five hundred years of contact between the Central African peoples associated with, descended from, or linguistically and culturally related to the Kingdom of Kongo and those peoples transported across the Atlantic as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Briefly stated, five broad ideas were explored in the exhibition and the book, and these were broadened in the subsequent conference. The exhibition addressed Kongo and North America, as did the book. The conference extended the discussion to include the Caribbean and Brazil.

Robin Poynor is Professor of Art History, University of Florida. His recent work addresses relationships between the Yoruba of Nigeria and Yoruba Americans, those who have adopted aspects of Yoruba religion and attempt to live a Yoruba lifestyle in the United States, specifically those in Florida, which led to his co-edited (with Amanda Carlson) *Africa in Florida: 500 Years of African Presence in the Sunshine State* (2014). That project inspired *Kongo across the Waters*, both an exhibition (2013-15) and the book of the same title.

Susan Cooksey is the curator of African art, Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida. Cooksey has curated a number of original exhibitions, including “Kongo across the Waters” (2013-15) in collaboration with the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium; “Africa Interweave: Textile Diasporas” (2011); and “A Sense of Place: African Interiors” (2009).

Carlee Forbes is a doctoral student in African art history, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Her University of Florida master’s thesis focused on Kongo raffia textiles and mats. She worked as a curatorial and editorial assistant for the “Kongo across the Waters” exhibition and book.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v15/v15i3a1.pdf>

The first issue to be addressed was the fact that a highly organized political formation largely south of the Congo River had established itself by the fifteenth century. In 1483, it was visited by Portuguese sailors, and the Portuguese recognized it as a kingdom. Not only were the Europeans intrigued by the kingdom, but the Kongo elite were fascinated by the Portuguese and what they brought with them. In the ensuing decades, this extraordinary encounter between Central Africans and Europe led to an exchange of objects and ideas. At the earliest contact, Europeans admired Kongo art with its complex geometric motives, displayed in textiles and ivory sculpture. The Kongo elite, and eventually the more common people, converted to Christianity, and Kongo artists started producing the objects of the new Christian religion and gradually developed their own styles. Kongo representatives were sent to Europe and to Brazil.

The second issue treats the trans-Atlantic slave trade. By the seventeenth century, Europeans were increasingly in search of slave labor for their New World plantations and they started looking for it in Central Africa as well as in other regions of the continent. Although not all of the Kongo king's subjects were of free status, Kongo initially refused to sell its own. Instead they provided enslaved Africans who came from further inland. This dramatically changed in the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth century. Internal conflicts within Kongo combined with growing pressures from various European slave trading nations. The result was the increasing victimization of many unfortunate Kongolese who were shipped across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and to North and South America. North American archaeological evidence, for example, suggests that the first generations of enslaved Kongolese drew on their cultural memories to engage in rituals in order to obtain spiritual comfort and protection in extremely difficult living conditions.³

The third topic deals with changes in Central Africa in the nineteenth century with the ending of the slave trade and the growing trade in agricultural produce in response to the rapid industrialization of European nations. These changes created many new opportunities for Kongo chiefs and commercial entrepreneurs. Wild rubber, ivory, palm oil, and palm nuts were exchanged for European spirits, weapons, textiles, ceramic ware, and many other consumer goods that were accumulated by successful chiefs and merchants. Such articles were "consumed" to enhance their owners' status, and they were displayed on graves as prestige items. The nineteenth century trade revolution led to increasing political competition, and artists were encouraged to innovate and produce the finest objects for their wealthy patrons. This period is characterized by a flourishing of the arts in Kongo, reflected in the arts of leadership, initiation, and commemoration, and in ritual objects for divination, healing, and protection (*minkisi*).

A fourth topic addresses the fact that as African American communities and cultures developed in the Americas, as a result of complex processes that involved cultural emancipation but also creative borrowing and creolization, a number of traditions emerged that clearly bear the imprint of Kongo culture. Examples of these are found in basketry, figurative pottery, decorated walking sticks, commemorative objects, and last but not least music. And finally, contemporary reflections on Kongo history, religion, philosophy, iconography, and art endures, stimulating creative artists working in Africa, as well as in the Caribbean, South America, and the United States. By borrowing from Kongo technique, sculptural forms, or iconography, contemporary artists addressing global audiences infuse their works with some of

the narrative and aesthetic power previously mastered by Kongo artists, whose names recent history has most often obliterated.

The four papers in this issue of the *African Studies Quarterly* do not pretend to address all of the topics brought up in the exhibition, book, and conference, but they are continuations of discussions surrounding some of the questions addressed. They are loosely related in that they all focus on the cultures referred to as Kongo, and all developed out of presentations at the Carter conference. Three articles address the impact of the kingdom and the Kongo peoples over time and space—in both North and South America. The fourth returns to present day Central Africa to address changes that have taken place there in the recent past.

Jason Young suggests that “Black culture in the plantation Americas is not only connected to African pasts through a set of documentable cultural behaviors, practices or beliefs—as indeed it is—but is also connected to similar insurgencies around the Atlantic—in Africa, throughout the Americas and in Europe.”⁴ While the articles by Jeroen Dewulf and Marina de Mello e Souza address traditions in the American Northeast and in Brazil that likely began at an earlier time and continued, Young addresses nineteenth century Low Country practices.

We have chosen to place the Young article first because he addresses broad ideas that have to do with identifying specific African elements in the cultures of the New World. In his contribution, he notes the “hefty weight of academic opposition” that hampers the tracing of new world traits to African sources, citing Foucault, Gilroy, and Sally and Richard Price, whose work criticizes the seeking of sources for African American culture or suggests that it is or can be a “vexed matter.” He quotes Gwendolyn Midlo Hall as suggesting it is “highly political.” Richard Price, Young states, “charges scholars who chart the persistent role that the long arm of Africa played in the cultures of blacks throughout the Americas . . . with bending or ignoring counter evidence to support ideological positions.” Young states that Sally and Richard Price argue that researchers “intent on proving a chosen historical scenario can almost always locate some objects or design styles in one tradition that closely resemble some objects or design styles in another.”⁵ Young asserts, however, that in creating folk cultures, “enslaved Africans drew on remarkably resilient aspects of African culture that spurred on cultural developments in the Americas even as these cultures remained plastic.” He suggests that the “formal and aesthetic relationships at play here are not merely the result of some random comparisons of what seem to be similar cultural practices.”⁶ Indeed, as organizers of the exhibition and conference, we ask: cannot specific African transfers be traced as well as European transfers? We suggest that they can, although perhaps not as easily since the records for African participation in the amalgamation of transatlantic cultures are much sparser. Yet today more data are discovered in documentation through ships’ records and sales documents related to the sale of humans.⁷ Diligent research has brought to light other documents formerly hidden away in archives.⁸ Archaeological investigation has added further physical documentation.⁹ Thus, many more resources are now added to the objects and design styles that the Price and Price reference in their dismissal.

Young emphasizes the fact that historical relationships between peoples are a source to be examined. To illustrate this idea, he looks to the ceramic face vessels created at a specific time and place—in the mid-nineteenth century at Edgefield, South Carolina. Formal and aesthetic connections alone may not be convincing. These must be considered in combination with

historical documentation. The face jugs appear about the same time as the late arrival of a slave vessel, *The Wanderer*.¹⁰ At least one hundred of the four hundred Central Africans transported aboard *The Wanderer* ended up at Edgefield, and a number of them were assigned at one time or another to the potteries located there. It was here that that face vessels were first made, at about the same time the new workers were being incorporated into the labor force of the potteries. Specific information about the individuals aboard the *Wanderer* was later recorded by Charles Montgomery, who sought the memories of certain persons who were aboard the ship. The names and the locations from which some of these individuals originated in the Kongo region were recorded in his 1908 publication for which he interviewed survivors.¹¹

The articles by Dewulf and Souza address the practice of electing kings for special occasions—both in the American Northeast and in Brazil. Both the Kongo court and its traditions seem to be expressed in numerous places in the diaspora, sometimes in the context of lay brotherhoods within the Catholic Church. Evidence suggests, however, that even without the supporting matrix of the Catholic Church, ideas of Kongo royalty were articulated. The court reflected in the diaspora is not the Kongo court as it existed in pre-Portuguese times, but as it had changed in response to that contact. Kongo elites almost immediately incorporated European practices into the court and adopted European ways into their daily lives. Upon the 1491 baptism of the *manikongo*, for example, crucifixes, swords, and figures of saints were introduced to be displayed and manipulated in religious events and court practices, as recorded by visitors. Illustrations created for Capuchins and others demonstrate the blending of European and Kongo culture. Thus a type of creolization had taken place in Africa prior to its occurrence in the new world.

By the height of the slave trade in the eighteenth century, Christianity had been practiced for over one hundred years. Kongo memories in the Atlantic diaspora were those that had already incorporated both Portuguese and Kongo practices. Events and celebrations among the enslaved are recorded all over the American Diaspora from New England all the way to Argentina.¹²

Jeroen Dewulf provides a background for the widespread phenomenon of black brotherhoods, ultimately springing from Iberian traditions introduced to the Kongo, but modified in light of Kongo experience. Similarities in the traditions of black brotherhoods in New England in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and Brazil have been noted.¹³ All perhaps stem from the Portuguese pattern noted in Central Africa. The fact that those in New England existed suggests that such systems must have been in place in Africa prior to their being introduced into North America, since the Catholic Church within which such brotherhoods had thrived was not a major player in the American northeast. Enslaved Africans must have had experience with them in Africa, or perhaps in the Iberian Peninsula. For example, black brotherhoods and the related celebrations are known to have been introduced to Lisbon at least as early as the end of the sixteenth century, where at least nine such brotherhoods have been documented. The phenomenon was widespread, especially in Portuguese dominated regions. The Portuguese governed regions in Africa—São Tomé, Mozambique, and Angola—but also controlled their colony in Brazil, where great numbers of central Africans were deposited. Black brotherhoods existed in all regions dominated by the Portuguese. However, Dewulf finds evidence that such brotherhoods existed in non-Portuguese

regions, and even in regions dominated by Protestants and thus outside the nurturing structures of the Catholic Church. Such organizations as black brotherhoods throughout the diaspora, in both Portuguese regions and in other areas, and the events that those fraternities sponsored, likely led to a number of results such as black solidarity, the construction of black identity, mutual aid, and social mobility. In some cases they even led to manumission when brotherhoods collected funds to purchase freedom for members.

Discussions of events organized by black brotherhoods in North America question Berlin's assumption that connections among black people in North America were limited to informal occasions.¹⁴ Indeed, it seems some were well organized and structured—such as those discussed in Dewulf's article. He notes that in mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts African Americans dressed in their best, carried drums, banners, guns, and swords, and elected a chief magistrate on an occasion known as "Negro election day." Similar events have been recorded from the mid-eighteenth into the nineteenth century not only in Massachusetts, but also in Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. Such records document occasions in which enslaved people of African descent elected a leader they referred to as "governor" or "king." During these events feasting, dancing, parades, and the firing of guns were common. Such "kings" were provided with emblems of royalty including crowns and swords.

While Dewulf looks at Kongo king celebrations in Protestant North America, Marina de Mello e Souza investigates Kongo kings festivals in Brazil, where Catholicism was dominant but also where most of the enslaved people were from Central Africa. Most Kongo kings events were thus carried out in communities dominated by Central Africans, although those from other regions of Africa and other ethnic identities participated, and the organizations did seem to draw from a number of African cultures. Within the context of Catholic lay brotherhoods, a privileged space was created in which enslaved Africans and their descendants could not only venerate their patron saints, but they could also create identities and reinforce social ties, thus building solidarity. These organizations and events were not secret. Indeed, they were encouraged by both masters and government officials, and Catholic priests supervised them. Feasts were celebrated on the premises of the groups, but their activities—such as parades often moved into the streets as well.

Kongo kings festivals in Brazil have been interpreted differently depending of the lens through which they were viewed and the time period in which they were experienced. In the nineteenth century, masters perceived the *congadas* (festivals) as a sign of Europeanization and concomitant subjugation, comparing them to medieval events. Conversely, black participants viewed the role of Kongo kings as symbolic of an unvanquished Africa, considering that the Kongo kingdom remained on more or less equal footing with Portuguese monarchs until the nineteenth century. Identifying with the Kongo kingdom provided a rallying point for African slaves in Brazil and created greater solidarity and a greater sense of power when mediating with outsiders. Africans, and savvy observers of Kongo court life in Africa, knew of the internalization of Catholic and European culture that occurred in the Kongo region over hundreds of years, and was transmitted to the *congadas*.

Just as cultures in the Americas changed in response to various African presences, and specifically Kongo presence, as noted in the three articles mentioned above, the Kongo region of Central African has also responded to continuous bombardment of religious, philosophical,

political, material, and scientific introductions from both Europe and the Americas. John Janzen's article draws our attention back to Central Africa and present-day Kongo. Janzen focuses on a different set of issues, specifically health and healing, important considerations in the context of the Atlantic Dialogue. Again, Kongo religion is addressed, but it is not the primary focus. As Janzen proposes, "'Science' and 'spirit' are shorthand terms that represent two prominent aspects of health and healing in postcolonial Kongo." The distinction, he asserts, is not a contradiction pitting present practices (science) against those of the past (spirit), and it is not a dichotomy between introduced biomedicine and the traditional medicine as practiced by *banganga*. Instead, the understanding and practice of science in healing works alongside the "continued use of spiritual healing and views of the world that engage spiritual forces—human as well as non-human." Janzen asserts that while earlier popular understanding of healing through *banganga* may continue to some degree, it has been for the most part supplanted by scientific knowledge. Yet, the new knowledge is "used and prioritized . . . in the interest of reinforcing even deeper Kongo social and moral values."

Close examination of African societies in the Black Atlantic World, as seen in the first three of the following articles, affirm their reliance on firmly rooted memories of Kongo cultural practices to create more cohesion and maximize their social and political standing. Even as the power of the Kongo kingdom dwindled, it achieved a level of parity with Europeans that transplanted Kongs and other Africans exploited for political and social advantage, in the context of new cultural forms. Likewise, on the African continent, as the fourth article suggests, health practitioners benefit from their memories of Kongo traditional healing and from knowledge of biomedicine to create new and effective treatments and cures. The four articles thus illuminate the legacy of Kongo cultural practices and ideologies as they are recalled and reconstructed to inform lives of Kongo people and their descendants in the Kongo Atlantic world.

Notes

- 1 For over twenty-five years the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida has organized annual lectures or a conference in honor of the late distinguished Africanist scholar, Gwendolen M. Carter. Gwendolen Carter devoted her career to scholarship and advocacy concerning the politics of inequality and injustice, especially in southern Africa. She also worked hard to foster the development of African Studies as an academic enterprise. She was perhaps best known for her pioneering study *The Politics of Inequality: South Africa Since 1948* (1958) and the co-edited four-volume *History of African Politics in South Africa, From Protest to Challenge* (1972-77).
- 2 Cooksey, Poynor, and Vanhee 2013.
- 3 In the exhibition, this was illustrated by materials from the Chesapeake Bay area, the Georgia/South Carolina Lowcountry, and New Orleans, the three major North American areas to which Central African were traded.
- 4 Young in this issue.
- 5 Price and Price 2000, p. 296; see also Young in this issue.

- 6 Young in this issue.
- 7 The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, for example, provides information on more than 35,000 slave voyages involving more than twelve million Africans transported to the Americas between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Vos 2013b addresses the slave trade. Hall 2005, working with sale documents, traced original, manuscript documents located in courthouses and historical archives throughout the State of Louisiana to create The Louisiana Slave Database, which contains 99,419 records.
- 8 In a panel at the 56th African Studies Annual Meetings titled “The Church and Social Life in Angola before 1900,” Vos 2013a and Candido 2013 discussed gaining access to rarely used parish records from the bishop’s archives in Luanda to uncover previously hidden dimensions of social and political life in precolonial and early colonial Angola. The archives of the bishopric, kept in the old Jesuit mission of Luanda, have rarely been used by historians of Angola since access has been difficult. The panel demonstrated the benefits to be gained from such parish records, but it also highlighted limitations of using official religious documents for the writing of African history.
- 9 For example, archaeologist Mark P. Leone, Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland, College Park has teamed with colleagues and the Historic Annapolis Foundation to organize the Archaeology in Annapolis project. In Leone 2013, he and his students addressed Kongo evidence. The group intends to promote better understandings of Annapolis’ diverse past through the interpretation of material culture. Other archaeologists are likewise intent on relating their excavations and findings to the African and African descended peoples who lived on the sites in the past. Christopher Fennell, founding editor of the *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage*, has worked on the African Diaspora Archaeology Network. Fennell 2013, addresses the broad issues of interpreting Kongo connections to archaeological sites. Kenneth L. Brown of the University of Houston addresses African-American archaeology of both the slave and tenant in excavating the Levi Jordan Plantation in Texas and the Frogmore Plantation in South Carolina. See, for example, Brown 2001.
- 10 In 1858, *The Wanderer* illegally imported some four hundred Africans onto Jekyll Island, Georgia. This took place a half-century after the United States had banned the trans-Atlantic slave trade.
- 11 Montgomery 1908.
- 12 Dewulf cites Thornton 1993.
- 13 In citing sources that compare European festivals and Brazilian Kongo king festivals, Souza cites Araújo, Fernandes, Gimenes, and Lima, all referenced in her article below.
- 14 Berlin 1996.

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“We Wear the Mask”: Kongo Folk Art and Ritual in South Carolina

JASON YOUNG

Abstract: This article argues for a vision of the African diaspora as an arena of “insurgent nostalgia,” a restive remembrance and embodiment of the past. Blacks throughout the diaspora reconstituted and reconfigured elements of African culture through a series of sacralized and ancestral elements created, imagined, and remembered in ritual practice. But the black cultures that subsequently arose throughout the plantation Americas were not mere broken fragments of African cultural precedents. Instead, they comprised wholly formed cultures in the Americas that claimed certain historical relationships with African art and aesthetics—to be sure—but that also reflected a communion with larger communities of black people around the diaspora for whom “Slavery” was the name of a history, yet to be overcome; and “Africa” the clarion call for a world of new horizons, hopes, and possibilities.

Introduction

*“Dave belongs to Mr. Miles,
Where the oven bakes, and the pot biles”
--Dave the Potter*

In the Introduction to *Kongo across the Waters*, editors Susan Cooksey, Robin Poynor and Hein Vanhee suggest that the book, its accompanying exhibition, and perhaps even the conference Kongo Atlantic Dialogues, are all “metaphor[s] that describe one of the rich historic cultures of our world, having developed *on this side of the water* into a complex set of ideas, beliefs and forms of expression” and on “*the other side of the water*” to include ideas about Africa and Kongo as a land of origin in a vast diaspora; or as an “Other World” veiled behind the land of the living.¹ Much of the scholarship devoted to these metaphors has been driven by the impetus to document, historicize, codify, and display the connections that pertain between the cultures of Africa and those of the plantation Americas. This work enjoys a fruitful historiography evident in the various projects that populated the panels of the Kongo Atlantic Dialogues Conference held at the University of Florida in February 2014.

The work of drawing these links has been a long and arduous task due, in part to the difficulty of registering documentable relationships that are legible in the sundry disciplines—

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history, art history, anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics, among others—that comprise our various professional vocations. Our source material is strewn about in archives, scattered across continents, and hidden underfoot. From these fugitive sources, we work feverishly to document cultures and connections that can be verified and validated through the various methods of our chosen disciplines.

But the work has been made difficult also by the hefty weight of academic opposition that has often accompanied the work. Writing in *Cities of the Dead*, Joseph Roach, following Michel Foucault, argues that because memory (read: history) is constituted by a process of nonlinear and continual surrogations, the search for origins is a futile, if not misguided, enterprise: “What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.”² Writing similarly, Paul Gilroy argues that although African linguistic, political and philosophical themes are still visible in Black Atlantic cultures “for those who wish to see them, they have often been transformed and adapted by their New World locations to a new point where the dangerous issues of purified essences and simple origins lose all meaning.”³

Taken together, these criticisms make clear that the question of Africa’s role in the development of African American culture can be a vexed matter; “inevitably, it is highly political,” as one historian recently noted.⁴ But going even further, anthropologist Richard Price suspects that something even more nefarious is afoot in this persistent desire to see African pasts in the cultures of blacks throughout the plantation Americas. Writing in “On the Miracle of Creolization,” Price maintains that it is “hard to escape the conclusion that ideology and politics—the specifics of North American identity politics—continue to direct the master narratives, as well as influence how they are read.”⁵ Amounting to a “motivated erasure of countervailing scholarship,” Price suggests that these identity politics are “rooted in ideological partis-pris.”⁶ In effect, Price charges scholars who chart the persistent role that the long arm of Africa played in the cultures of blacks throughout Americas—as well as their sympathizers and apologists—with bending or ignoring counter evidence to support ideological positions. In this sense, scholars who argue for the centrality of Africa in the study of African American cultures are likely representing an ideological position based on identity politics, rather than an academic position based on evidence. Of course some have bristled under these criticisms. Michael Gomez, for example, responded to Price and others by suggesting that “the cultural and social formations of transported Africans tend to invite a quality of critique unique in its level of elevated scrutiny.”⁷

In my own contribution to *Kongo across the Waters*, I argue that in creating folk cultures around the Diaspora, enslaved Africans drew on remarkably resilient aspects of African culture that spurred on cultural developments in the Americas even as these cultures remained plastic, being malleable enough to adapt to new conditions.⁸ In this vast field of cultural inheritance and ingenuity, Africa is what you make it. It is a language and the folklore that flows from it; a song and the ring shout that circles us. It is carved, molded, woven and crafted into shape.

Following Saidiya Hartman, I am proposing a vision of the African diaspora as an arena of “insurgent nostalgia,” or a sort of restive remembrance and embodiment of the past. For Hartman, blacks throughout the diaspora reconstituted and reconfigured elements of African culture through a series of sacralized and ancestral elements created, imagined and

remembered in the use of prayer trees and inverted pots, performed in the ring shout, called up in sacred gatherings, devotional dances to ancestral spirits and in otherwise "remembering things they had not witnessed or experienced." In this view, insurgent nostalgia "transformed the space of captivity into one inhabited by the revenants of a disremembered past."⁹ When followed to its logical conclusion, this argument has led some scholars to suggest that certain aspects of black culture in the Americas reflect merely the "confused remnants" of older African traditions; "traces of memory that function in a manner akin to a phantom limb," once viable and functional though now irrevocably ripped away and unrecoverable. What is felt is no longer there.¹⁰ While I find great value in Hartman's notion of "insurgent nostalgia," I want to challenge the idea that blacks in the plantation Americas understood themselves most significantly in terms of loss and displacement or that "the history of the captive emerges precisely at this site of loss and rupture" as Hartman suggests.¹¹ Whatever we might say about black cultures in the plantation Americas, and whatever claims we might make about the relationship between these cultures and the cultures of Africans from the principle slaving regions of the continent, my own view is that African diasporic cultures are whole, notwithstanding their distance, both temporal and geographic, from a supposed African precedent. They reflect fully realized cultural expressions, even when expressed under the greatly attenuated circumstances of slavery.

Black culture in the plantation Americas is not only connected to African pasts through a set of documentable cultural behaviors, practices or beliefs—as indeed it is—but is also connected to similar insurgencies around the Atlantic—in Africa, throughout the Americas and in Europe. In each instance, these cultures are drawing on the past to create cultures that critique their societies by expressing pressing political, cultural, and social concerns. At the beginning of this essay, I noted that the conveners of the Kongo Atlantic Dialogues conference use water as a metaphor to help articulate the historical and cultural relationships between Kongo and the United States. Veering just a bit from that model, I would like to consider another meteorological metaphor—the wind—as a way of illustrating some of my own ideas. Writing in *Mama Day*, novelist Gloria Naylor describes a wind that started

on the shores of Africa, a simple breeze among the palms and cassavas, before it's carried off, tied up with thousands like it, on a strong wave heading due west...Restless and disturbed, no land in front of it, no land in back, it draws up the ocean vapor and rains fall like tears...It rips through the sugar canes in Jamaica, stripping juices from their heart, shredding red buds from royal Poincianas...A center grows within the fury...A still eye. Warm. Calm. It dries a line of clothes in Alabama. It rocks a cradle in Georgia.¹²

By the time the winds spin back around to the Carolina coast, they are all a rage. An old oak tree holds, "the rest is destruction."¹³

Those winds are, as Ntozake Shange writes it, the slaves who were ourselves.¹⁴ They are people tied up with thousands like them; they are the vast and varied cultures of the African diaspora. Those winds comprise cultures of succor and reprieve when they dry a line of clothes in Alabama or rock a baby to sleep in Georgia. But they are also a furious rebellion in Carolina or Haiti or Brazil. Rather than see these American winds as merely derivative of the African breeze that preceded it—lesser, lost, and alienated winds—I am arguing that a vision of the

African diaspora as an arena of insurgent nostalgia recognizes the entire space as a crosshatch of currents scratching, cutting, and clawing their way around the Atlantic rim. These winds have histories. They follow roughly proscribed patterns and currents, but they are not mimetic or derivative. Taken together, they comprise vast network of trade winds that crisscross the ocean.

Unlike some who see futility in the search for African pasts, I want to emphasize that this insurgent nostalgia is rooted in the historical connections that bind African diasporic peoples together. These connections are meaningful and worth exploration and the results of this research cannot be dismissed as mere fantasy or base reduction. For example, Kamau Brathwaite is not producing a phantasm of Africa when he recalls the Caribbean winds that signaled St. Lucia's annual dry season. He writes:

it was the seasonal dust-clouds, drifting out of the great ocean of sahara—the harmattan. By an obscure miracle of connection, this arab's nomad wind, cracker of fante wood a thousand miles away, did not die on the sea-shore of west africa, its continental limit; it drifted on, reaching the new world archipelago to create our drought, imposing an african season on the caribbean sea. And it was these winds too, and in this season, that the slave ships came from guinea, bearing my ancestors to this other land...¹⁵

Braithwaite's Caribbean season originates in Africa, to be sure, though it is no mere derivation.

The benefit of seeing the African Diaspora as an arena of insurgent nostalgia is that it allows for the real (read: documentable) relationships that connect the waters and the winds and the peoples of the Atlantic. This goes a long way, I think, to respond to the charge made by Richard and Sally Price suggest that any determined researcher "who is intent on proving a chosen historical scenario can almost always locate some objects or design styles in one tradition that closely resemble some objects or design styles in another."¹⁶ To my mind, the formal and aesthetic relationships at play here are not merely the result of some random comparisons of what seem to be similar cultural practices. Instead, they emerge out of the historical relationships between peoples. At the same time, insurgent nostalgia encourages a full consideration of the ways that cultural practices and behaviors provide pressing political, social, and aesthetic critiques, highlighted by their urgency and immediacy.

I would like to turn now to a consideration of how an idea of the African diaspora as a field of insurgent nostalgia might contribute to our understanding of the historical and continuing relationships between Kongo and the United States. In the mid-nineteenth century, African American potters in the Edgefield district of South Carolina produced a fascinating set of ceramic face vessels that have since inspired scholarly controversy across disciplines as successive generations of historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and others have debated their provenance and ultimate significance. At the turn of the century, ceramic historian Edwin Barber described the vessels as "weird-looking water jugs, roughly modelled [sic]...in the form of a grotesque human face,—evidently intended to portray the African features." For Barber, these vessels held particular interest "as representing an art of the Southern negroes, uninfluenced by civilization...the modelling reveals a trace of aboriginal art as formerly practiced by the ancestors of the makers in the Dark Continent."¹⁷

More recently, Robert Farris Thompson and John Michael Vlach have provided more serious and sustained treatment of the African origins of the face vessels. Thompson, citing a vast tradition throughout West Africa of using multi-media in figural sculpture—and the absence of such in European pottery traditions—argues that "there is nothing in Europe remotely like" the face vessels.¹⁸ For his part, Vlach has drawn links between the face vessels and the *n'kisi* tradition in West-Central Africa. For Vlach, "the face jugs with bulging white eyes and the small wooden statues with eyes made from white shells are end points of a stylistic continuum stretching the breadth of the ocean."¹⁹

These formal and aesthetic connections have since been strengthened by reference to the 1858 arrival of a slave ship, *The Wanderer* that illegally imported a cargo of some four hundred captive Africans onto Jekyll Island, Georgia in 1858, half a century after the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade was made illegal in the country. Many of the captives on board that ship were from West-Central Africa and about one hundred ended up in Edgefield, South Carolina as slaves at area potteries. These newly arrived captives, then, provided the initial spark that inspired the subsequent, though brief production of face vessels.

Opposition arose soon after Thompson and Vlach proposed what might be called a Kongo thesis for the face vessels. Some critics have been vocal in their opposition to the idea that South Carolina face vessels bear the mark of Kongo influence, or even, in some cases, that they were made by blacks at all.²⁰ Writing in "Afro-American Folk Pottery in the South," John Burrison rejected the idea of an African connection on grounds "that in order to seriously propose an African genesis for a Black American tradition, the same tradition...must first be found in Africa...Further, one must demonstrate that the Black American tradition in question is more likely to have been imported from Africa than developed independently and coincidentally as a domestic phenomenon, or borrowed from whites or Indians here who may have had a similar tradition."²¹

The problems with this critique are several not least of which is that it presumes, even requires, cultural practices on both sides of the Atlantic to be static, frozen in time as if awaiting some future formal comparison. Not only that, but the cultures must also remain hermetically sealed from any outside influences. Nevertheless, this sort of criticism—not only in the case of face vessels, but in other arenas as well—has often driven subsequent research and shaped the historiographical questions in the field. Elsewhere I have expressed concern that too often, the central questions in these debates have been whether or not and to what extent African American cultures are authentically African; and whether or not and to what extent black people in the United States have retained (one might say, performed) an authentic African past.²² In order to enter the fray, one must engage the debate on its own terms by presuming, on the one hand, that pasts are such as can be identified in their authenticity and, on the other, that the special task of an anthropology of peoples of African descent consists of providing the evidence, both theoretical and methodological, necessary to debate the role of African pasts in black American culture.²³

While I acknowledge not only the need, but indeed the importance of tracing African influences in black cultural practices throughout the plantation Americas, I also want to emphasize that these practices are not to be mined only as inventories of African pasts. As it relates to face vessels, one can immediately imagine the ways that these vessels might be put to

use to better understand a whole range of projects, including the continued significance of African cultural continuities in the United States, but also the persistence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the late 19th century, as a possible new idiom for sustaining African American religious beliefs while resisting slave power, and as an early inspiration for the subsequent development of 20th century African American visual cultures. These vessels are one among many insurgencies happening around the Atlantic that communicate a particular relationship to Kongo art and aesthetics—to be sure—but that also reflects a communion with larger communities of people “for whom ‘Slavery’ is the permanent name of a trial and tribulation which they are yet to overcome, and ‘Africa’ the name of a difference, of a refusal, and therefore of a horizon of hopes at once moral, and historical, aesthetic, and political.”²⁴

Notes

- 1 Cooksey, Poynor, and Vanhee 2013, p. 13.
- 2 Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” quoted in Roach, p. 25.
- 3 Gilroy 1993, p. 48.
- 4 Hall 2005, p. xxi.
- 5 Price 2006, p. 132.
- 6 Ibid., 124.
- 7 Gomez 2006, p. 2.
- 8 Young 2013.
- 9 Hartman 1997, p. 72.
- 10 Piersen 1977, p. 153; Hartman 1997, p. 74.
- 11 Hartman 1997, p. 74.
- 12 Naylor 1988, pp. 249-50.
- 13 Ibid., p. 250.
- 14 Shange 1982, p. 36.
- 15 Brathwaite 1974, p. 73.
- 16 Price and Price 2000, p. 296.
- 17 Barber 1905, p. 466.
- 18 Thompson 1983, p. 39.
- 19 Vlach 1990 [1978], p. 86.
- 20 Ibid., p. 82.
- 21 Burrison 1983, p. 332. Still Burrison did gesture toward the possibility of African origins, noting that “Even if African work in clay did not influence Edgefield face vessels, African work in wood, as carved ceremonial dance masks, may have. Such a shift in media could have been triggered in Edgefield District by a fresh infusion of 170 Africans from an illegal cargo on the slave ship Wanderer in 1858. One of them, named Romeo, evidently worked at Thomas Davies’ Palmetto Fire Brick Works in 1863. See Burrison, 2012
- 22 Young 2007, pp. 3-4; Scott 1999, p. 108.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid., 107.

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Black Brotherhoods in North America: Afro-Iberian and West-Central African Influences

JEROEN DEWULF

Abstract: Building on the acknowledgement that many Africans, predominantly in West-Central Africa, had already adopted certain Portuguese cultural and religious elements before they were shipped to the Americas as slaves, this article argues that syncretic Afro-Iberian elements must also have existed among slave communities outside of the Iberian realm in the American diaspora. It explores this possibility with a focus on Afro-Iberian brotherhoods. While it was long assumed that these so-called “black brotherhoods” were associated with slave culture on the Iberian Peninsula and in Latin America only, it can now be confirmed that Afro-Catholic fraternities also flourished in parts of Africa during the Atlantic slave trade era. A comparative analysis of king celebrations in Afro-Iberian brotherhoods with those at Pinkster and Election Day festivals in New York and New England reveals a surprising number of parallels, which leads to the conclusion that these African-American performances may have been rooted in Afro-Iberian traditions brought to North America by the Charter Generations.

Introduction

When Johan Maurits of Nassau, Governor-General of Dutch Brazil (1630-54), sent out expeditions against the maroons of Palmares, he was informed by his intelligence officers that the inhabitants followed the “Portuguese religion,” that they had erected a church in the capital, that there were chapels with images of saints and the Virgin Mary and that Zumbi, the king of Palmares, did not allow the presence of “fetishists.” Portuguese sources confirm that Palmares had a priest who baptized children and married couples and that its inhabitants followed Catholic rite, although according to Governor Francisco de Brito, they did so “in a stupid fashion.”¹

Many more examples of the existence of Afro-Catholic elements in maroon communities in Latin America can be found. They question the widespread assumption that Catholicism had been forced upon all African slaves and that, even among those who seemingly embraced the colonizer’s faith, and that it functioned merely as a veneer underneath which their truly

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v15/v15i3a3.pdf>

African, indigenous beliefs remained hidden. As the case of Palmares indicates, slaves did not necessarily wish to liberate themselves from all “Catholic ballast” once they ran away but sometimes remained strongly attached to it.²

This conclusion corresponds to the assumption by the Brazilian historian Marina de Mello e Souza that upon arrival in the Americas, many slaves did not perceive Catholic elements as something foreign since “Catholicism represented a link to their native Africa.”³ Souza is but one of several scholars who in recent years contributed to a shift in the study of black performance culture in the New World. The new paradigm essentially consists in the acknowledgment that our understanding of black performance culture can be bettered if we take into consideration that many Africans had already adopted certain European—predominantly Portuguese—cultural and religious elements before they were shipped as slaves to the Americas.

In the context of this shift, there has been an increased interest in Afro-Iberian brotherhoods (*irmandades/hermandades*) and confraternities (*confrarias/cofradías*). While it was long assumed that these so-called “black brotherhoods” were associated with slave culture on the Iberian Peninsula and in Latin America only, it can now be confirmed that Afro-Catholic fraternities also flourished in parts of Africa during the Atlantic slave trade era. As Linda Heywood has argued, “many Kongos and not a few Angolans had been Christians before their enslavement in Brazil. Thus they would have been familiar with the brotherhoods in Luanda, Soyo, and Kongo, and the central role they played in the creole society of Kongo, Angola and São Tomé.”⁴ Nicole von Germeten’s research on black brotherhoods in Mexico also concluded that “some Central Africans probably took part in social and religious brotherhoods and sisterhoods before crossing the Atlantic.”⁵

Ira Berlin also observed that black brotherhoods played a crucial role in the intercontinental networks that developed in the context of the transatlantic slavery. However, like most scholars, Berlin perceives brotherhoods as an essentially Iberian phenomenon that was crucial to the development of black identity in the Iberian World, differing from that in North America, where “numerous informal connections between black people” developed, but not brotherhoods. Although Berlin confirms that slaves “created an intercontinental web of *cofradías* ... so that, by the seventeenth century, the network of black religious brotherhoods stretched from Lisbon to São Tomé, Angola, and Brazil,” he believes that those slaves who ended up in Dutch, French or English colonies refrained from developing brotherhoods since there were no “comparable institutional linkages” that allowed them to do so.⁶ Berlin’s assumption thus presupposes that brotherhoods could only be established with institutional support and excludes the possibility that slaves themselves may have taken the initiative to create such organizations.

This article questions this conclusion and explores the possibility that slave organizations modeled upon Iberian brotherhoods have existed in North America. In doing so, it follows the reasoning of Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Matt Childs, and James Sidbury, according to whom “approved institutional structures authorized by the Catholic Church were not always necessary for Africans and their descendants to build fraternal structures.”⁷ A first section provides an overview of the characteristics of Afro-Iberian slave brotherhoods. The following section presents a comparative analysis between king celebrations in Afro-Iberian brotherhoods

and those at African-American Election Day and Pinkster festivals in New England and New York. The article ends with a reflection on the origins of Afro-Iberian cultural and religious elements among slave communities outside of the Iberian realm in the American diaspora.

Black Brotherhoods

Since the European Middle Ages, Catholic lay brotherhoods played a crucial role in Iberian culture. These brotherhoods were dedicated to either a Catholic saint or to the Virgin Mary and annually celebrated the day dedicated to their patron. Traditionally, the festivities of the brotherhood's patron coincided with the election of the new board. This was accompanied by a banquet offered by the brotherhood's leader to all members. Each brotherhood had its own regulations for membership, and the type of brotherhood one adhered to corresponded to one's standing in society. Certain brotherhoods consisted exclusively of members of aristocratic families, while others were restricted to members of certain professional corporations or to inhabitants of certain neighborhoods. Even marginalized groups such as beggars and the blind sometimes had their own brotherhoods. Following a European medieval procedure for dealing with potentially troublesome minority groups, the authorities expected the leaders of such brotherhoods to act as representatives of the entire group and held them accountable for acts of misconduct by their members. In urban centers with large African slave populations such as Lisbon, Cadiz, and Seville, so-called "black brotherhoods" developed, composing free blacks and slaves. The type of black brotherhood to which slaves adhered usually corresponded to their origin or "nation," generally named after the place or region in Africa from where they had been shipped, such as (São Jorge da) Mina, Mozambique, or Angola.

In Portugal and Portuguese colonies, most black brotherhoods were associated with Our Lady of the Rosary. Founded in the German city of Cologne in the fifteenth century, this brotherhood had been promoted by Jakob Sprenger (1435-1495), who in his role as inquisitor considered it an ideal instrument to combat pre-Christian traditions related to witchcraft and the worshipping of ancestors. Sprenger, therefore, dedicated considerable attention to fraternal solidarity between the dead and the living and opened the brotherhood to the poorest of the poor without regard to ethnicity, gender or social status: "[I]n our brotherhood no one will be kept out, no matter how poor he may be; but rather the poorer he is, the more disdained, and despised, the more acceptable, beloved, and precious will he be in this brotherhood."⁸

The brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary arrived in Lisbon in the late fifteenth century, where it soon became associated with the city's black population. Although originally a racially mixed brotherhood for blacks and poor whites, the black community eventually separated and formed the exclusively black *Irmandade da Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos* (Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Black Men) in 1565. By the end of the sixteenth century, there were at least nine black brotherhoods in Portugal, most of them dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary.⁹

Black brotherhoods possessed a hierarchal structure, in which European aristocratic and military titles were used. This strict hierarchy was accompanied by a democratic decision-making process. For instance, Chapter XXVI of the 1565 charter of the black brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary in Lisbon stipulated that members wishing to be designated as prince, count, judge, treasurer, superintendent, scribe, administrator, and king had to submit their

request to an electoral commission. The kings of black brotherhoods usually served influential masters and expected the latter to support the annual celebration of the brotherhood.

Membership in a brotherhood was not the choice of a small minority, but rather the general rule. This is not surprising considering that brotherhoods strengthened black solidarity, enabled the maintenance or construction of a collective identity, provided a mutual-aid system in order to care for the needy, and secured a minimal social mobility that, in exceptional cases, could lead to manumission. In fact, the collection of money to liberate brothers and sisters from the bonds of slavery was one of the main goals of black brotherhoods. Moreover, brotherhoods functioned as a means of cultural affirmation as they provided blacks with a chance to have their own chapels, to participate in processions with their own performances, to have Masses for the souls of the living and dead members and to make sure that members received an honorable funeral and burial place. The participation at processions and subsequent festivities during which collections were held and booths sold food and drinks served as an important source of income for black brotherhoods. Other forms of revenue were dues, donations, the collection of alms, the organization of (paid) funeral marches, and testaments. Typically, members would donate jewelry to embellish the statues of the brotherhood's patron saint or the Virgin Mary. Not surprisingly, thus, black brotherhoods were often accused by slaveholders of handling stolen goods.

King celebrations and processions primarily occurred on holidays that were intimately related to the black community such as the feast day of Saint Iphigenia, a former Nubian Princess (September 21), that of the Sicilian St. Benedict—*il Moro*—whose parents had been African slaves (October 5), and of Our Lady of the Rosary (first Sunday in October). Other important holidays for black brotherhoods were Corpus Christi, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day, St. John's Day (June 23), and St. James' Day (July 25).

Brotherhoods played an important role in Portugal's missionary policy in the context of its colonial expansion. The first black brotherhood in Africa, dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, was established in the year 1495 on Santiago, one of the islands of the Cape Verde archipelago.¹⁰ The impact of this brotherhood on local performance culture was considerable. Documents indicate that in the mid-eighteenth century it was still common to see "gatherings of the kings of the brotherhood of the Rosary" on Santiago and that "in all neighborhoods of the island women and men were elected to serve as kings and queens, who every Sunday and holiday stage parades with their drums and flutes in order to collect money."¹¹ From the Cape Verde islands, a Luso-African Creole culture developed on the nearby West African coast. There, so-called *lançados* established relationships with local women and spread a syncretic form of African Catholicism. Closely related to these communities were those of the Kristons or Grumetes, Africans who had converted to Catholicism and adopted a Luso-African lifestyle. According to Gerhard Seibert, "their communities were organized on the basis of Catholic brotherhoods [that] celebrated Catholic feasts and provided members in need."¹² In 1526, a second black brotherhood, also dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, was established in Africa, on the island São Tomé. The brotherhood's charter granted the possibility to request *alforria* (manumission) for any slave, male or female, who had become a member. Similar to what had occurred in Santiago, the slave class in São Tomé thus became stratified, with certain slaves being higher placed than others in a hierarchy that promised manumission at the top of

the scale. This system stimulated slave loyalty and their adoption of Portuguese cultural and religious elements.¹³

Portuguese missionary work in East Africa began in the early sixteenth century and was initially coordinated from the Jesuit stronghold in Goa, India. A separate diocese, detached from Goa, was established in 1610 on the island of Mozambique. There, the Dominican convent had a black brotherhood dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. From the island of Mozambique, several attempts were made by Jesuits and Dominicans to convert inland rulers. Despite some successes—most notably the conversion of the King of Mutapa in 1652—little more was achieved than the formation of small Catholic enclaves populated by Portuguese men, their African wives and mixed raced children. At least one of these Catholic enclaves in the interior, Sena, had a black brotherhood of the Rosary.¹⁴

The main focus of Portuguese missionary activities in Africa was West-Central Africa. Catholicism had been introduced in the Kingdom of Kongo in 1491, when Portuguese missionaries baptized the Manikongo Nzinga a Nkuwu as King João I of Kongo. Whereas Nzinga a Nkuwu had remained hesitant to fully embrace the new faith, Catholicism truly expanded in Kongo under the king's son Mvemba a Nzinga (c.1456-c.1542), better known under his Portuguese, Catholic name Afonso I. Catholicism in Kongo did not depend on European missionaries to thrive because an active local laity took their place. The few European missionaries in the kingdom worked alongside local interpreters, catechists and churchwardens and in practice very much depended on them. These lay ministers not only spread the new faith all over Kongo but were also employed in missionary activities in the kingdom of Ndongo, the Mbundu regions and Loango. Thanks to them, John Thornton claims, "Christianity conquered Kongo peacefully—but at the cost of adapting itself almost wholly to the 'conquered' people's conception of religion and cosmology."¹⁵ Kongolese Catholicism was, in fact, a profoundly syncretic variant of Catholicism that stood closer to traditional indigenous beliefs than to the Church of Rome. Despite its syncretic character, the Kongolese Catholic Church was officially recognized by the Vatican and people in Kongo proudly identified themselves as Catholics.¹⁶ A list of questions, submitted to the ambassador of the Kingdom of Kongo in Lisbon in 1595, reveals that by the late sixteenth century the Kongolese capital São Salvador already counted six lay brotherhoods: that of Our Lady of the Rosary, the Holy Sacrament, Saint Mary, the Immaculate Conception, the Holy Spirit, St. Ignatius, and St. Anthony.¹⁷ According to Raphaël Batsîkama, the St. Anthony brotherhood, in particular, had a profound impact on Kongolese religious culture.¹⁸ Capuchin missionaries, who operated in Kongo from the mid-seventeenth until the late eighteenth century, established dozens of new brotherhoods—most notably that of St. Francis of Assisi and of Our Lady of the Rosary, but occasionally also that of the Cord of St. Francis, St. Bonaventure, and the sisterhood of the Slaves of Mary. The importance of brotherhoods to the Capuchin's missionary strategy is apparent in the case of the Flemish missionary Joris van Geel—one of the few non-Italian Capuchins operating in the Kongo—who carried with him several prewritten documents with the text "Rules of the brotherhood of..., founded at the Church of..." when he started his mission in 1651.¹⁹

Continuous conflicts with the kings of Kongo over control in West-Central Africa prompted the Portuguese to expand their stronghold in Luanda, which they had established in the southern edge of the kingdom in 1575. Luanda became a center of Portugal's missionary

ambitions in the region, spearheaded by the Jesuits. In and around Luanda but even as far into the interior as Massangano, a Luso-African culture developed, which naturally included brotherhoods.²⁰ It is in Luanda that the most spectacular example of Afro-Iberian procession culture has been recorded, the anonymous description of the celebrations following the canonization of the Jesuit Francis Xavier in 1620:

First of all, a flag and a portrait of the saint were made.... The procession began at the main church of the city.... In front one could see three giants.... [T]he giants were followed by Creoles from São Tomé, who performed their dances...and amongst them was their king, before whom they gave speeches, according to their custom. Then the confraternities of the city followed and these are the following: the confraternity of St. Lucia, of the Holy Mary Magdalene, of the Holy Body (Corposant), of St. Joseph, of the Souls of Purgatory, of St. Anthony, of Our Lady of the Rosary, of Our Lady of the Conception, of the Most Holy Sacrament, all with their respective pennants.²¹

This report confirms that in seventeenth-century West-Central Africa a vivid Afro-Iberian procession culture existed in the context of black brotherhoods.

A similar pattern has been observed in Latin America. It is unknown whether the earliest brotherhoods in the Americas were created by the church authorities or on the initiative of slaves themselves. Writing about the island Hispaniola in the 1540s, Giralmo Benzoni noted that “the blacks make common cause among themselves” and “each nation recognizes its own king or governor,” which indicates the latter.²² In his description of early seventeenth-century Cartagena, the Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval also noted that slaves “depended on their brotherhoods to bury them.” This was of vital importance, he noted, as nobody else cared for the piles of slave bodies left unburied, “thrown in the rubbish dump, where they will be eaten by dogs.”²³

One of the earliest extensive descriptions of a king election ceremony in the Americas, dating back to 1666, comes from Pernambuco, Brazil.²⁴ It was penned by the French traveler Urbain Souchu de Rennefort:

Despite the difficult life they are living, the blacks sometimes have a chance to distract themselves. On Sunday, September 10, 1666 they had a feast in Pernambuco. After celebrating Mass, a group of about four hundred men and one hundred women elected a king and a queen, marched through the streets singing and reciting improvised verses, playing drums, trumpets and frame drums. They were wearing the clothes of their masters and mistresses, including golden chains and pearls.²⁵

Later sources provide more detailed descriptions of such king election ceremonies. A famous example is that of Henry Koster, who during his stay in Brazil between 1809 and 1815 witnessed a brotherhood king election in Pernambuco:

In March took place the yearly festival of our Lady of the Rosary, which was directed by negroes; and at this period is chosen the King of the Congo nation, if the person who holds this situation has died in the course of the year, has from

any cause resigned or has been displaced by his subjects. The Congo negroes are permitted to elect a king and queen from among the individuals of their own nation, the personages who are fixed upon may either actually be slaves or they may be manumitted negroes. These sovereigns exercise a species of mock jurisdiction over their subjects which is much laughed at by the whites; but their chief power and superiority over their countrymen is shown on the day of the festival. The negroes of their nation, however, pay much respect to them. ... We were standing at the door, when there appeared a number of male and female negroes, habited in cotton dresses of colours and of white, with flags flying and drums beating; and as they approached we discovered among them the king and queen, and the secretary of state. Each of the former wore upon their heads a crown, which was partly covered with gilt paper, and painted of various colours. ... The expense of the church service was to be provided for by the negroes; and there stood in the body of the church a small table, at which sat the treasurer of this black fraternity and some other officers, and upon it stood a box to receive the money.²⁶

Considering these parallels between African and Latin American brotherhoods, one is inclined to question whether black performance traditions in North America with characteristics similar to the ones presented in this section can also be traced back to Afro-Iberian brotherhoods.

King Celebrations in New England and New York

In his *Annals of Salem* (1845-49), Joseph Felt provided the following description of an African-American tradition that was known in Massachusetts as "Negro Election Day:" "When the long wished for day of anticipated pleasure came, they were seen attired in their best, with drums, banners, guns and swords. ... Having elected their chief magistrate, they adopted regulations as the circumstances of their association required."²⁷

Similar "elections" have been recorded from the mid-eighteenth until the mid-nineteenth century in Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. On those days, slaves elected a leader, whom they called "governor" or "king." This election procedure was accompanied with a lavish meal and dance performances, which included a parade during which salutes were fired. Kings were given a crown, sword and other emblems of royalty. One of them paraded through town "on one of his master's horses, adorned with plaited gear, his aides beside him *à la militaire*."²⁸

The "elections" reveal that there was a hierarchy among the slaves, whereby those who served "a master of distinction" occupied leading positions in the slave organizations. Slave owners did not attempt to prevent such forms of self-government among the slaves.²⁹ Rather, as Wilkins Updike has shown, they rather rendered them support and took pride in clothing their slaves with some of their finest luxuries on Election Day:

The slaves assumed the power and pride and took the relative rank of their masters, and it was degrading to the reputation of the owner if his slave appeared in inferior apparel, or with less money than the slave of another master

of equal wealth. The horses of the wealthy landowners were on this day all surrendered to the use of slaves, and with cues, real or false, heads pomatumed and powdered, cocked hat, mounted on the best Narragansett pacers, sometimes with their master's sword, with their ladies on pillions, they pranced to election.³⁰

The fact that slaveholders tolerated and even supported this tradition indicates that they perceived it as useful. In fact, after being elected "king" or "governor," the leader of the black community was expected to take charge of misdemeanors by slaves that arose during his term of office. Orville Platt mentions the existence of "a sort of police managed wholly by the slaves," and a black "court," whose punishments had more of an effect since "people of their own rank and color had condemned them, and not their masters."³¹ As an example, William Piersen cites the case of a slave called Prince Jackson who was found guilty of stealing an axe whereupon he was given twenty lashes by King Nero's deputy sheriff.³²

According to Sterling Stuckey, the "Election Day ceremony [served] much of the same function for blacks [in New England] that Pinkster served for New York blacks."³³ Just like Lynn had its King Pompey, South Kingstown its King Prince Robinson and Portsmouth its King Nero Brewster, New York's capital Albany had its King Charles.³⁴ An anonymous eyewitness described the annual "Pinkster" (Pentecost) procession in Albany featuring King Charles and other black dignitaries in the year 1803:

All things being now in readiness, on Monday morning, the blacks and a certain class of whites, together with children of all countries and colours, begin to assemble on *Pinkster Hill* collected from every part of the city and from the adjacent country for many miles around, forming in the whole a motley group of thousands.... An old Guinea Negro, who is called *King Charles*, is master of ceremonies, whose authority is absolute, and whose will is law during the Pinkster holiday. On Monday morning between the hours of ten and twelve o'clock, his majesty after having passed through the principal streets in the city, is conducted in great style to *The Hill* already swarming with a multifarious crowd of gasping spectators. Before *him* is borne a standard, on which significant colours are displayed, and a painting containing his *Portrait*, and specifying what has been the duration of his reign. Two pedestrians, in appropriate badges, lead a superb steed, of a beautiful cream colour, on which their fictitious sovereign rides in all the pomp of an eastern *nabob*—whilst a large procession of the most distinguished and illustrious characters follow after. At length he reaches the encampment, and after the ceremonies in honor of his arrival are ended, he proceeds to collect his revenue.³⁵

The fact that the Albany processions during Charles' reign started in State Street, located in one of Albany's most noble districts, indicates that the city's elite was at the very least willing to tolerate the tradition and most likely rendered some type of support to it, similar to what occurred during Election Day ceremonies in New England.

An example of such cooperation can be found in C.M. Woolsey's *History of the Town of Marlborough* (1908): "An old man with a large tract of land had among his slaves one called Harry. He was very large and a fine-looking fellow. He was the leader of a company or drilled

as such. His old master was very proud of him, and he always rode his owner's big black stallion on such occasions."³⁶ References to "black kings" have also been found at other places in New York. In 1738, for instance, the *New-York Weekly Journal* mentioned how "[s]everal people have been amus'd here with Relation of a Discovery of a Plot concerted by the negroes at Kingston, but by good Information, we find it to be no more than an intended Meeting, to drink to the Memory of an old Negro Fellow, dead some Time ago, whom they used to call their King."³⁷

Scholars have traditionally assumed that "Election Day" and "Pinkster" were an imitation or parody of European traditions. Due to the similarities with Lord of Misrule festivals, these festivals tended to be perceived as a "safety valve allowing a cathartic release from the pent-up frustrations," as Shane White has suggested.³⁸ Considering the many parallels to brotherhoods, the spectacular celebrations could also be interpreted as the annual festive manifestation of a well-organized cooperative structure that implied black group solidarity as well as occasional negotiations with slaveholders. The fact that these organizations were capable of coordinating events that in the case of Albany attracted up to a thousand visitors also puts pressure on Berlin's argument that only "informal connections between black people" existed in North America.³⁹

References to highly similar black king celebrations can be found in other parts of the Americas outside of the Iberian realm. In Martinique, for instance, the French governor made the following report of the 1758 Corpus Christi celebration:

Several [slaves] were richly dressed to represent the King, Queen, all the royal family, even to grand officers of the crown. The Governor was even assured that in one of the parishes of the island, the priest had the year previously introduced two darkies who imitated the King and Queen into the sanctuary where they were both placed into the chairs.⁴⁰

In 1843, James Phillippo wrote that in Jamaica "each of the African tribes upon the different estates formed itself into a distinct party, composed of men, women, and children. Each party had its King or Queen, who was distinguished by a mask of the most harlequin-like apparel. They paraded or gamboled in their respective neighborhoods, dancing to the rude music."⁴¹ Henry Breen reported that in St. Lucia "each society has three kings and three queens, who are chosen by the suffrages of the members. The first, or senior, king and queen only make their appearance on solemn occasions, such as the anniversary of their coronation or the *fete* of the patron saint of the society."⁴² Writing about the Virgin Islands, Thurlow Weed mentioned that "the slaves on each estate elect their Queen and Princess, with their King and Prince, whose authority is supreme."⁴³ In his *History of British Guiana* (1893), James Rodway argued that "it had been customary for years for the negroes of every nation in a district to choose head-men or 'Kings,' under whom were several subaltern officers of the same nation." The duties of these kings were "to take care of the sick and purchase rice, sugar, &c., for them, to conduct the burials, and that the customary rites and dances were duly observed."⁴⁴

Similar king elections and subsequent parades with flags and music have been observed among slave communities all over the American diaspora, from New England all the way to Argentina. As Thornton confirms:

The newly arrived African field hands often looked to organizations formed by their “nation”—a loose grouping of people from the same part of Africa or the same ethno-linguistic group—to provide leadership of nations ... through the election of kings and queens. These elections were widespread in the society of Afro-American slaves in all parts of the Americas. In Iberian America the annual elections were public events, while in other areas they were acknowledged if not recognized.⁴⁵

Scholars such as Margaret Creel, Michael Gomez and James Sweet have argued that such pan-American parallels in black performance traditions can be traced back to the establishment of slave associations in the American diaspora, which they believe to be modeled upon indigenous African religious and mutual-aid societies such as Ogboni, Kimpasi and Ekpe. However, the use of flags, crowns and banners in king parades along with the use of European aristocratic titles cannot be explained with reference solely to indigenous African traditions.⁴⁶

One could therefore assume that such king election ceremonies in the American diaspora, including the ones performed on Election Day and Pinkster, may have their roots in Afro-Catholic brotherhoods brought to the Americas by the Charter Generations. Not by accident, Piersen’s extensive research on New England’s Election Days made him conclude that king elections in Brazilian black brotherhoods bear “striking similarity to the eighteenth-century Yankee pattern.”⁴⁷

Transatlantic Connections

In 1921, the Cuban anthropologist Ortiz already suggested that slave king elections in the New World related to a Hispano-Portuguese pattern.⁴⁸ The assumed transfer of an Iberian pattern to areas outside the Iberian realm in the Americas implies that many Africans must have adopted certain Iberian cultural and religious elements before they were shipped to the Americas as slaves. Such a claim can be convincingly made for a high percentage of Africans who constituted the Charter Generations in the New World. As Toby Green has shown, the overwhelming majority of slaves who were shipped to the New World until the mid-sixteenth century were West-Africans who had previously lived on the Iberian Peninsula, the Cape Verde Islands or São Tomé, all areas with a strong brotherhood tradition. From the late sixteenth until the mid-seventeenth century, West-Central Africa became the dominant source of American-bound slaves.⁴⁹ During this era labeled by Heywood and Thornton as “the Angolan wave,” it is legitimate to assume that a high percentage of slaves had already familiarized itself with Afro-Portuguese cultural elements before being shipped to America.⁵⁰ Joseph Miller therefore assumes that Iberian or Afro-Iberian cultural elements formed a connection between both groups and argues that upon arrival in the New World, West-Central African slaves lived in intimate contact “with predecessors who had arrived in small numbers from backgrounds in slavery in late medieval Iberia” and that “particularly those coming through Kongo channels, must have had a useful familiarity with Portuguese Christianity and used it to find places for themselves without relying on the more ‘African’ aspects of their origins.”⁵¹

The survival of (Afro-)Iberian elements in areas outside of the Iberian realm also implies that the Charter Generations’ culture and traditions profoundly impacted slaves who arrived in later decades. The survival of these elements presupposes that the Charter Generations not only

established organizations modeled upon brotherhoods but also that these organizations were preserved by later generations and may even have been adopted, albeit in an adapted form, by slaves originating from parts of Africa—mostly West Africa—with little or no Portuguese cultural influence. As Sidney Mintz, Richard Price, and Gwendolyn Midlo Hall have confirmed, Charter Generations did, in fact, often manage to set a cultural pattern that was emulated by slaves who arrived in the Americas in later decades.⁵²

All available data indicates that West-Central Africans are the most likely group to have set a strong pattern of Afro-Iberian elements in the Americas, also outside of the Iberian realm. Unless they previously lived in the Iberian Peninsula or on one of the Portuguese-controlled Atlantic islands, one can assume that relatively few slaves with roots in West Africa, the lower Guinea region and East Africa had adopted Iberian cultural elements before arriving in the Americas. This was different, however, with West-Central Africans. As Heywood confirms, “a significant percentage of the Central Africans who left the region as slaves had ... been influenced by ... Afro-Portuguese culture” and may have been responsible for “an early and continuing Central African cultural presence in the American diaspora.”⁵³ Heywood and Thornton further argue that, upon arrival in the Americas, it was primarily West-Central African slaves who “possessed the means to set down their own cultural pattern in the Americas, even where they were subsequently outnumbered by new arrivals” and who provided “a crucial cultural model for the waves of captives, mostly from West Africa, brought in by the slave trade after 1640.”⁵⁴

The outstanding example of such an Afro-Iberian pattern set by West-Central African slaves comes from the Danish Virgin Islands, where the Moravian missionary worker Christian Oldendorp noted during his stay on the islands in the 1760s that it was common “primarily by the Negroes from the Congo” to perform “a kind of baptism ... characterized by pouring water over the head of the baptized, placing some salt in his mouth, and praying over him in the Congo language.” According to Oldendorp, this practice was of Portuguese origin and involved baptismal fathers and mothers who “adopt those whom they have baptized ... and look after them as best they can. They are obliged to provide them with a coffin and burial clothing when they die.”⁵⁵ The fact that Kongolese catechists catered to the needs of newcomers and ensured that they would receive a decent burial suggests that they operated in the context of a brotherhood-related organization.

If we apply this theory to the case of New York, it can be confirmed that the Charter Generation in the Dutch colony New Netherland and its capital New Amsterdam consisted almost exclusively of slaves of West-Central African origin. Their typically Lusitanian Catholic baptismal names such as Manuel, António, João, Isabel, Madalena, and Maria indicate that these slaves had gone—with various degrees of exposure—through a process of Iberian acculturation before they were shipped to America. Heywood and Thornton assume that these slaves “had adopted not only Christianity but elements of Portuguese language, law, foodways, clothing items, and names” before their arrival in New Amsterdam.⁵⁶ Culturally, religiously and linguistically, the Charter Generation in New Netherland formed, thus, a largely homogenous group with well established and mutually shared traditions of which some had Afro-Iberian roots. It has also been documented that these slaves managed to successfully defend their interests as a group. Documents make reference to a slave called Sebastião as the “captain of the

blacks,” which confirms the existence of some type of organization.⁵⁷ According to Graham Hodges, all available data on the black community in New Amsterdam indicates that it formed an organization that “best resembled the confraternities or brotherhoods found among Kongolese and Angolan blacks living in Brazil.”⁵⁸

Although the Charter Generation is the most likely group to have introduced brotherhood traditions in New York, it should also be noted that among the slaves who were later brought to New York from Caribbean islands such as Jamaica or Barbados, some must have been familiar with Afro-Iberian traditions. Writing about Barbados in 1654, the French priest Antoine Biet mentioned, regarding the local slave population, that “if any of them have any tinge of the Catholic Religion which they received among the Portuguese, they keep it the best they can, doing their prayers and worshipping God in their hearts.”⁵⁹ John Storm Roberts also pointed out that while black culture in Jamaica was traditionally believed to have been almost exclusively of West African origin, “strong Congolese elements were discovered ... in Afro-Christian ... sects.”⁶⁰ Mullin has also provided examples of Jamaican newspaper descriptions of fugitive slaves in the 1790s referring to a “Negro woman with a crucifix necklace,” another bearing a “cross shaped Spanish mark” and a third one as “speaking Portuguese.”⁶¹

Mary Jorga, who in a report from New York dated 1741 is referred to as a “free Portuguese baptized negress,” was probably such a Caribbean slave with West-Central African roots.⁶² A reference in the *New York Gazette* of August 1733 to a runaway slave from Jacobus van Cortlandt called Andrew who “professeth himself to be a Roman Catholic” confirms the continuous existence of consciously Afro-Catholic slaves in New York well into the eighteenth century. Andrew’s case is all the more interesting since he had shirts with him that were “marked with a cross on the left Breast.” In the Kingdom of Kongo, shirts with an embroidered cross were a prerogative of nobles who had been granted knighthood in the Order of Christ.⁶³

Conclusion

While the earliest historians working on slave culture in a North American context were mainly interested in an assumed process of assimilation according to European standards, later generations pointed out the need to look for indigenous African continuities and for the creation of syncretic cultures and innovations in the New World. The conclusions of this paper suggest the necessity to complement the latter with an increased focus on the amount of contact Africans had with European—primarily Portuguese—culture before they were shipped as slaves to the Americas.

Since the early sixteenth century, African rulers had become key players in the Atlantic trade. These transatlantic connections brought new ideas, cultural concepts and products as diverse as Chinese silk, Brazilian cassava, Indian textiles, Maldivian cowries, Mexican maize, Dutch gin and Portuguese church bells to Africa, where they had a strong impact on local cultures. In consequence of the transatlantic trade, the entire African west coastal area became an intercultural zone, marked by inter- and extra-African cultural mixtures to which not only Arab-Islamic but also Iberian-Catholic cultural elements contributed substantially. It is, as such, only natural that some enslaved Africans not only brought indigenous African traditions to the New World, but also syncretic traditions such as Afro-Iberian brotherhoods.

This new paradigm in the analysis of African-American performance traditions requires a change in attitude regarding the role of Christianity in African culture. Time and again, scholars narrowly reduced anti-colonial resistance to the attachment to pre-colonial traditions and failed to understand that, in many cases, the appropriation and reinvention of the idiom of the colonizer was a much more effective strategy in dealing with colonial aggression. That the strategic adoption of specific European elements by Africans did not imply submission to European standards can be illustrated by the occurrences surrounding the 1760 Battle of Kitombo. Convinced that they had been victorious in that battle thanks to a miraculous intervention of St. Luke, the rulers of the Kongolese region of Soyo decided to establish a new holiday dedicated to this Catholic saint. They did so after their army had administered a humiliating defeat to the Portuguese, members of the same nation that in 1491 had brought Christianity to Central Africa.

Notes

- 1 Van Baerle [1647] 2011, p. 236; Bastide [1960] 1971, vol. 1, pp. 21-35; Kent 1965, pp. 166-68.
- 2 Genovese 1979, p. 62; Tardieu 1984, p. 265; Thornton 1992, pp. 268-70; Landers 2002, pp. 227-42; Von Germeten 2008, p. xxvii; Landers 2013, pp. 153-62.
- 3 Souza 2005, p. 83. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from languages other than English are mine.
- 4 Heywood 1999, p. 21.
- 5 Von Germeten 2013, p. 252.
- 6 Berlin 1996, p. 275-76.
- 7 Cañizares-Esguerra, Childs, and Sidbury 2013, p. 9.
- 8 Winston 1993, p. 634.
- 9 Lahon 2001-02, pp. 19-62; Saunders 1982, pp. 105-07; Tinhorão 1988, pp. 122-68; Borges 2005, pp. 89-98; Fiume 2007, p. 25.
- 10 Green 2012, p. 105.
- 11 Pereira 2005, pp. 337-41, 353.
- 12 Seibert 2012, p. 49.
- 13 Brásio 1952-88, vol. 1, pp. 472-74, 501; Seibert 2006, pp. 28-30.
- 14 Brásio 1973, pp. 547-62; Borges 2005, p. 50; Hastings 1994, pp. 120-23.
- 15 Thornton 1984, p. 154.
- 16 Ibid., pp. 147-67.
- 17 Cuvelier and Jadin 1954, p. 187.
- 18 Batsíkama 1999, pp. 5, 15.
- 19 Hildebrand 1940, p. 251. Also, see Brásio 1952-88, vol. 5, p. 612; vol. 15, pp. 482-97; Newitt 2010, p. 224; Jadin 1966, pp. 312-14.
- 20 Brásio 1952-88, vol. 3, p. 502; Heywood and Thornton 2007, p. 188.
- 21 Felner 1933, pp. 531-44.
- 22 Benzoni [1540] 1857, p. 94.
- 23 Von Germeten 2008, pp. xii-xiii, 71, 134.

- 24 Souza 2002, pp. 172-79; Kiddy 2005, pp. 22-31.
- 25 Souchu de Rennefort [1688] 1988, p. 225.
- 26 Koster 1816, pp. 243-44.
- 27 Felt 1845-49, vol. 22, pp. 419-20.
- 28 Caulkins 1866, pp. 330-31. See also Reidy 1978, pp. 102-17; Wade 1981, pp. 211-31; White 1994, pp. 13-50; Fowler 1866, p. 162.
- 29 Platt 1900, pp. 318-20.
- 30 Updike 1847, pp. 178.
- 31 Platt 1900, pp. 323-25.
- 32 Piersen 1988, pp. 134-35.
- 33 Stuckey 1994, p. 73.
- 34 White 1989, pp. 191-99.
- 35 Albany Centinel 1803.
- 36 Woolsey 1908, p. 234.
- 37 New-York Weekly Journal 1738.
- 38 White 1991, p. 99.
- 39 Berlin 1996, p. 276.
- 40 Peytraud 1897, pp. 182-83.
- 41 Phillippo 1843, p. 93.
- 42 Breen 1844, p. 192.
- 43 Weed 1866, p. 345.
- 44 Rodway 1893, pp. 295-97.
- 45 Thornton 1933, p. 200.
- 46 Creel 1988, pp. 45-54, 181-82; Gomez 1998, pp. 99-102; Sweet 2003, p. 207.
- 47 Piersen 1988, p. 124.
- 48 Ortiz 1921, pp. 5-39.
- 49 Green 2012, pp. 189, 194, 208, 457.
- 50 Heywood and Thornton 2007, p. ix.
- 51 Miller 2002, p. 61.
- 52 Mintz and Price 1976, pp. 25-26; Hall 2005, p. 169.
- 53 Heywood 2002, pp. 2, 12.
- 54 Heywood and Thornton 2007, p. 238.
- 55 Oldendorp [1770] 1987, p. 263.
- 56 Heywood and Thornton 2009, p. 194.
- 57 Van Laer 1974, 4:96; see also Heywood and Thornton 2009, pp. 194-99; Van Zandt 2008, pp. 137; Gehring 1980, p. 55; Christoph 1991, p. 159; Frijhoff 1995, p. 769; Heywood and Thornton 2007, p. 264; Other experts on African-American performance culture have also suggested or at least entertained the possibility that slave organizations modeled upon Afro-Iberian brotherhoods may have existed in North America. See Kinser 1990, pp. 43-45; Sublette 2008, pp. 114-15.
- 58 Hodges 1999, p. 28.

- 59 Handler 1967, pp. 61, 67, 71.
- 60 Roberts 1998, p. 34.
- 61 Mullin 1992, p. 239.
- 62 Hodges 1999, p. 124.
- 63 New-York Gazette 1733. According to the Capuchin missionary Raimondo da Dicomano, knights of the Order of Christ in the Kingdom of Kongo enjoyed “the privilege to put lots of crosses made with pieces of cloth in several colors on their capes or on the cloths made out of straw which they use to cover themselves” (“il privilegio di potere mettere molte croci fatte di ritagli di panno di diversi colori nel ferraiolo ò in quel panno di paglia con che ordinariamente si coprono”). Arlindo [1798] 2008. See also Fromont 2008, p. 89; Heywood and Thornton 2007, pp. 135-43.

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Kongo King Festivals in Brazil: From Kings of Nations to Kings of Kongo

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Translated by Silvia Escorel

Abstract: Popular culture in Brazil owes a great deal to African cultural elements that have been reorganized and reassembled through various and multiple historical processes. One particular festivity that takes place in many regions and has occurred since the beginning of Portuguese colonization consists of the coronation and celebration of black kings. This happened under the veil of Catholic brotherhoods that congregated groups of Africans and their descendants, who were slaves, freed or free born individuals. In the eighteenth century these were known as “black king celebrations.” The celebrated individuals were identified as “kings of nations” and represented specific ethnic or multi-ethnic groups. The designation *congada* appeared for the first time at the beginning of the nineteenth century to refer to such celebrations, and as time went by the ethnic black kings gradually turned into “kings of Kongo.” In the course of the nineteenth century, the king of Kongo festivals became, as a result of historical processes that had begun in the sixteenth century, the place of an affirmation of a black Catholic identity and a reinforcement of communitarian links, mainly among groups of Central African ancestry. Today the *congadas* are still performed by black and racially mixed groups, mainly in the southeast of Brazil.

Introduction

As early as the seventeenth century the choosing and celebration of a king among African communities and their descendants in Brazil was a widespread practice throughout all areas of the region into which Africans had been introduced. King celebrations took place within Catholic brotherhoods dedicated to the devotion to a patron saint. The process that led to the establishment of these celebrations, directed both to the spiritual entities and to affirming the authority of leaders before the communities they represented, must be understood in the context of social relations within Brazilian slave society.¹

Throughout the period of the slave trade the majority of enslaved people in Brazil were from the region of present day Angola, or West Central Africa, although other regions of the continent were surely represented as well. The celebration of the black kings was seen mostly

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(although not exclusively) within communities of Bantu-speaking origin. Such kings represented ethnic identities or “nations” based on the slave trade context, referring to such identities as Mina, Angola, and Benguela.² The election and celebration of black kings who held authority over groups organized around identities built with elements drawn from a number of African cultures have been documented since the eighteenth century. In spite of the fact that different ethnic groups lived in close proximity due to the design of the slave system, people tended to establish social ties with those coming from neighboring regions and with those sharing similar cultural backgrounds. The ways in which they organized themselves and related to their surroundings and to others resulted from various factors connected both to the group itself and to the social structure in which it took part. The latter played a major role in view of the fact that the people in question had to submit to the violence and the restrictions of the slave system.

In colonial Brazil, Catholic lay brotherhoods provided a privileged space in which enslaved Africans and their descendants were able to build new identities. Accepted and even encouraged by their masters and government officials, the brothers of these fraternities were supervised by the parish priests. However, much about the meanings of the events celebrated by the brotherhoods certainly escaped the comprehension of the masters as well as that of the supervising priests and government administrators. The significance expressed through celebrations conducted by the brothers were not fully comprehended—especially the festivities in which a king was chosen.

Such brotherhoods existed in every region in which Portuguese colonization had been established, and the black king celebrations were often a part of such organizations. Both brotherhoods and black king events were still vigorous during the age of the Brazilian empire, and although they no longer have the social function they once held, the tradition survives to this day. Many black communities were able to seize the space opened up by the dominant system to transform the Catholic brotherhoods into places not only for the practice of the faith, but also as a means of building ties of solidarity among their self-identifying groups and for consolidating identities.

Many historical studies of the brotherhoods have been carried out by both Brazilian researchers and others, especially North Americans.³ However, the feasts celebrated by members of the brotherhoods on their premises as well as processions on the city streets were until recently more often studied by folklorists and ethnographers who described what they saw but did not go further in trying to understand the meaning behind those events.

Fifteen years ago, in my PhD dissertation, I had already dealt with this theme and sought to understand the reasons for the existence of kings in the black men’s brotherhoods, what roles they played in the group, both real and symbolic, and what sort of relationships they had with the wider spectrum of the slavery based society. In using travel writings and memoirs, brotherhood documentation, and previous academic studies, I proposed an interpretation of a certain aspect of these celebrations of black kings, linked to dances and performances presented by the king’s court, according to a format that seems to be the result of a combination of contributions that come not only from Portugal but also from Africa.

Nineteenth century accounts by travelers who witnessed these dances describe feasts quite similar to certain medieval court ceremonies or to popular parades of the medieval period. Yet

the travelers seem to have been limited in their knowledge and based their presumptions on what they knew — European feasts. Richard Burton is the sole observer who, in describing the performance of a black court, straightaway associated it with the leading elite of the Kongo. Besides their traditional titles, they had proudly adopted those of the European nobility, beginning as early as the first half of the sixteenth century. Burton described a *congada* he watched in 1867 on the premises of the Morro Velho mine in the Sabará area, where iron was mined by an English company. He says the men who turned up at the main house “were dressed, or imagined themselves to be dressed, according to the style of the *Água Rosada* house, descended from the great Manikongo and hereditary lords of Congo land.”⁴ In a note he says the *Água Rosada* dynasty held legitimate rights to the Kongo crown. We cannot say if the identification was made solely by him or if, during the performance of the play, there were other elements, perhaps in the verses, indicating a dynastic affiliation evoked by the dancers of the *congada*.

This leads us to turn to what was happening on the other side of the Atlantic, in and around the lands of Angola that had supplied the ports with the enslaved. The Kongolese society, governed by bloodlines, or *kanda*, such as those evoked by Burton, had from the early sixteenth century taken certain elements of European culture for their own, especially those pertaining to Catholicism and to rites connected to political power, such as titles and honorifics. Burton was aware of this. When he watched the festive representation of an African embassy, while other foreign observers saw rites rooted in European lore, Burton recognized court ceremonies of the Kongo. Since he had never visited that region of the African continent, Burton must have known them from written or oral accounts.

Just as nineteenth century observers saw these events through the prism of European popular festivities, so too did those of the twentieth century. In this way, even until recently, the *congadas* were understood as an incorporation of European festivities and symbols by the Africans and their descendants in Brazil. In spite of the evidently African elements in dances, rhythms, lyrics, and clothing, the interpreters, mainly folklorists, didn’t see precisely how much Kongo was alive in the *congadas*.⁵ But when we observe the Kongo kingship rituals performed in the Brazilian feasts, we notice that those holding the feast conceive of it as a rite invoking their mythical African past in which Kongo played a major role. The exalted Catholicism acknowledged in the feast, which included masses and processions and took place in honor of the brotherhood’s patron saint, was more than a path to integration into the master’s society. Moreover, it was definitely more than mere acceptance of a position of almost absolute subjection, guaranteed, in the end, through the violence of slavery. It was also a reminder of the Christian Kingdom of Kongo, which had proved itself capable of preserving its autonomy regardless of Portuguese dominion over the Angola region, which until the nineteenth century was a relatively small area whose main axis was Luanda. As a partner of Portugal, Kongo had been granted entry into the Atlantic trade circuits. Kongo thus had a unique history of relations with what was an empire of worldwide dimensions at the time. For a period of over three centuries, Portugal and Kongo maintained diplomatic and economic relations that faced moments of greater and lesser tension. Throughout the period, Portugal’s intent to conquer was relentless, but so were the efforts of the Kongolese rulers to resist.

Kongo was never made a part of the Portuguese empire until the actual colonial period, which began at the end of the nineteenth century. In spite of this, the royal and ecclesiastical authorities of Portugal used the acceptance of Catholicism on the part of the ruling elite to reinforce their image as an imperial power. It was not only in Brazil, but also in Portugal, that a king of the Kongo was celebrated in the feasts of the patron saints of the black male brotherhoods. And both in the center of the colonial rule and in the American colony (Brazil), an independent nation after 1822, these celebrations were understood in different ways by masters and slaves or free blacks, by those who watched and described, and by those who held and lived them.

As far as the masters were concerned, in Brazil the festivity was a confirmation of their own positions of power, a demonstration that the Africans and their descendants had joined the Catholic religion and reproduced patterns of sociability with a European hue, such as the organization in brotherhoods.⁶ Besides, the feast held to celebrate Catholic saints in which the king of Kongo was honored reminded them of the king's conversion to Christianity, which could be construed as a Portuguese conquest. Thus the imperial Portuguese power was understood as being honored in the event. On the other hand, to those holding the feast, the choice of representatives who linked their community with that of the masters and government officials was an important aspect of social organization. In addition to the practical aspect, the representations, dances, and songs performed around the king and those close to him (his court), strengthened a connection with the past and their own historical association with Kongo, which was also seen as a Christian nation by the central Africans.

The Brazilian feast kept alive a memory based on African enslavement and the resulting diaspora in which different ethnic groups from West Central Africa gathered under a new identity—that of Black Catholics. Both Africans and their descendants, the enslaved and the free, not only shared social conditions but also originated in the same region of Africa. And it was a king of Kongo who was chosen to be invested with the leadership of groups organized around the lay brotherhoods and meant to represent these Black communities in dealing with church and state authorities. These leaders, called “black kings,” were initially associated with various ethnic groups and different “nations.” Often in the eighteenth century documentation references *mina kings*, or *ardra, benguela*, and *angola* allude to these many “nations.” But from the nineteenth century on the majority of black kings were called “Kongo kings,” a denomination used even into the present. In my understanding, this process corresponded to the consolidation of a Black Catholic identity that diluted the original ethnic identities and helped to form a Black Brazilian identity in which Africa is referred to in a mythic way through the rituals of the festivities.

Kongo had played a major role in the region of present day Angola, home to many of those enslaved and transported to Brazil. In my view, at the time Black Catholic Brazilian communities consolidated, and as they developed their own identities and their capacity to fit into Brazilian society, albeit in a marginal position, Kongo took the place of a broader ancestral Africa capable of granting identity, an identity signifying a Catholicism that had already been internalized while still on African soil. At the same time, the ruling groups accepted the religious celebration of the king of the Kongo because they saw it as an innocent Africanization of the festive kingships that were a part of popular festivals such as the Empire of the Holy

Spirit, widespread in both Portugal and Brazil. But for those who held the feast, it was a sign that pointed to a still unconquered Africa. Thus it signified an identity that, although Catholic, was fundamentally African—not European.

This becomes even clearer when we consider the warlike dances performed in many situations in Kongo, but always associated with the chief's show of power and usually termed *sangameno* in the documentation. The same occurs when one considers the description of the rites practiced when chiefs granted an audience as well as those practiced by the retinues that accompanied the chiefs on their travels, either on long or short trips, carrying banners with crosses and including priests—either European or local African clergy—and musicians playing.⁷ I am not the only one who, upon scrutinizing the documentation, has made these connections. Burton noticed them when watching the *congada*, and it may have been only to his eyes that it meant not black theatre copying the white man's ways, but African theater making its way through African feasts rooted in Europe. The masters enjoyed the exotic flavor of the singing and dancing in their own way, but for them the sounds were grotesque and the steps monkey-like.⁸ For them the feasts surrounding the Black kings expressed the peaceful integration of the Africans and their descendants into Brazilian slave society.

My main contention with regard to Burton's perception may be the lens through which we see the events. For Burton, African societies, even that of Kongo, which had adopted Catholicism and Portuguese names, were still primitive, backward, and meriting only curiosity. Today we no longer observe Africa and Africans through the prism of evolution, juxtaposing the primitive and the developed. Instead we survey such situations from the standpoint of historical processes and the logic specific to each people, in accordance with the analytical tools of our time. And when looking at a cultural phenomenon through the lens of history, that is, seeking to understand how the *congadas* came into being, taking into account the long term and Atlantic circulation, we confirm the extent of African contributions to the forming of Brazil, its culture, and its society. Even in analyzing a ritual court whose members wear European clothing and that celebrates a Catholic saint, we can discern the direct link to Africa, the building of identities, and the reinforcement of social ties based on a common past, real or mythical, with which a major part of the group identifies itself. It is an African past that was already infused with European elements such as capes and feathered hats, titles of nobility, and Christian names, which were widely used by Kongo elite ever since the beginning of the sixteenth century.

To this day, Kongo occupies, as does Mozambique, a privileged place in the construction of the collective memories of Brazilian communities who lay claim to their African roots. Both *congo* and *moçambique* are today words primarily designating musical groups who differ between themselves, are often rivals, and are component parts of the Catholic festivities in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary and Saint Benedict. In these celebrations the kings and their courts parade through the streets together with musicians and dancers performing several choreographed numbers. The *congada* is one of the popular feasts still held in spite of the great changes brought about by modern ways of communication and transportation and the spread of the market economy to the farthest corners of Brazil's hinterland. Such changes usually lead to the abandoning of practices based on tradition. Although the *congada* is no longer primarily a black event and attracts people from all backgrounds, it still plays a role in strengthening

communal ties and attributing specific identities in many regions, especially in the southeast. Within this framework, the king and queen of Kongo continue to live, dressed as they should be and identified by power symbols such as scepters and crowns. To this very day, the Kongo and the Manikongo represent an important reference point for many black communities in Brazil who set up their identities evoking cultural and social historical specifics that are useful to them as diacritical signs.

Notes

- 1 I addressed these celebrations in my PhD dissertation published (published as Souza 2002).
- 2 Note that not all of these “nations” indicate West Central African origins, but as I will explain, the king celebrations are closely linked to Kongo histories.
- 3 The list of titles is long but it worth mention some of them: Scarano 1978, Borges 2005, Brandão 1985, Soares 2000, Mulvey 1976, Kiddy 2005, Reginaldo 2011, and Oliveira 2008.
- 4 Burton 1869, vol. 1, pp. 237-38.
- 5 Some of these interpretations are: Araújo 1959, Fernandes 1977, Gimenes 1948, and Lima 1948. Exceptions to this interpretation were Mario de Andrade and Câmara Cascudo, who, even not going too deeply, noticed the presence of strong references of African history and culture in festivities such as *congada* performed by the Afro-descendent community. See Andrade 1982 and Cascudo 2001.
- 6 Catholic brotherhoods are based on medieval guilds and were part of the colonial administration in Brazil, and the internal organization of black brotherhoods is similar to the European ones.
- 7 See Souza 2012a and Souza 2012b.
- 8 See, for instance, Castelnau 1949, pp. 171-72, and Spix and Martius 1938, pp. 127-30.

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Science and Spirit in Postcolonial North Kongo Health and Healing

JOHN M. JANZEN

Abstract: The Kongo region—the Lower Congo—from the 1960s until the present (2014) has seen the significant decline of mortality and natality rates, the tripling of the population, significant emigration, and the advent of family planning. In medicine, “biomedicine” (the medicine of global medical-school-taught doctors, nurses, lab technicians, and pharmacists, and related medicines and techniques) has become pervasive, largely replacing the tradition of the *nganga* and the *min’kisi*. However, the complex, socially-driven questions about misfortune continue to be asked by individuals and families; the examination—*mfiedulu*, *kufiela*, *kufimpa*—of relationships continues to be practiced by a variety of specialists (*nganga*, *ngunza*, family gatherings); a more expansive personhood common in Central, and Sub-Saharan Africa requires rituals of protection and holistic healing by *ngunza*, pastors, priests, biomedical doctors, and psychotherapists who minister to the “whole person” and the social group. Thus, while science has become the defining reality of medicine, the role of spirit—ancestral, social, religious—has persisted and in some respects even strengthened because of the loosening of social bonds and the chaos of the political order. The paper will explore examples of these trends identified in the author’s recent field research in Lower Congo, while making the case for an enduring Kongo or Western Equatorial African culture of health and healing.

Introduction

This paper sketches the state of health in North Kongo society, with a focus on changes in the postcolonial period since 1960; of initiatives taken, and institutions developed, to address the disease challenges and to improve the quality of life of the people of the region. This overview is informed by fieldwork in the 1960s, and more recently in 2013.¹

“Science” and “spirit” are shorthand terms that represent two prominent aspects of health and healing in postcolonial Kongo. This distinction is not a dichotomy between present practices versus past practices, nor between foreign-introduced biomedicine and traditional medicine. Rather, it has to do with the advance of understanding and practice of science in the

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<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v15/v15i3a5.pdf>

service of healing, as well as continued use of spiritual healing and views of the world that engage spiritual forces—human as well as non-human.

A sophisticated and nuanced anthropology is required to bridge the science and spirit continuum. Health as embodied in birth and death rates, and epidemiological trends of diseases, are readily amenable to quantitative indicators as seen in publications of the World Health Organization, local Health Zones, and government reports. Yet health is also interiorized in bodily and organic functions; it is exteriorized in words, signs, symbols, and sentiments that are projected onto relationships that affect health or sickness, suffering or joy. Health is thus studied through philosophical abstractions of themes that guide or reflect domains of social action.

The project I conducted in 2013 utilized several anthropological methods, beginning with that hallmark of anthropological fieldwork, participant observation—just hanging around, watching others, and being part of the action if possible. Activities seen or formulated in a particular context may serve to render visible ideas, values, or cultural conceptions and connections between them. I observed particular cases of illness, in their trajectories in the pursuit of healthcare, as well as the activities and organization of medical institutions.

The questionnaire I developed and administered to one hundred and five households in Luozi and in the North Kongo (Manianga) region provided a more balanced understanding of specific areas of behavior, knowledge, values, and opinions.² It identified household composition; occupations; illness episodes experienced in past year, treatment, and outcome; hygienic conditions around the house; the meaning of health (*mavimpi*); and family planning. This sample of was “opportunistic,” in the sense that it included groups intentionally selected for their likely differences in health and disease manifestations. In Luozi this included middle class—professional—and other households that benefited from the city’s potable water system, as well as those in outlying communities that did not have clean water; also, households of merchants, government administrators, teachers, and members of churches that practice healing. Included intentionally were households of cultivators who live beyond the city water system, of fishermen on the river. During a trip to the Kivunda region, we interviewed a similar cross-section of cultivators, educators, and craftspeople. From all these groups, we sought to include equal numbers of women of different age cohorts.

Important information for this study was sought in public records of the city, territory, in church offices, and publications available in libraries and individual holdings. Particular attention was paid to the Health Zone office where since 1984 public health initiatives have been made and records kept, and in the documents of church organizations charged with administering medical institutions.³

This research project would likely not have been possible without the key role of Professor Kimpianga Mahaniah, founder and CEO of the *Centre de Vulgarisation Agricole* of Luozi and Kinshasa, and Rector of the Free University of Luozi. When I wrote him in 2011 about my interest in returning to the Manianga for a research project on health he offered endorsement and scholarly expertise, as well as a generous supports in Luozi—lodging, caretaking staff, vehicle, and a circle of “handlers” who not only looked after us, but introduced us to a range of contacts in government, healthcare, education, and the community.⁴ They were generally aware

of the nature of anthropological research and were interested in the outcome of this research. I could not have hoped for a better support network.⁵

Population Trends, Diseases

The tripling of the population of the Manianga region, the wider Lower Congo, and the societies of Equatorial Africa in general, since the 1960s, despite the periodic wars that have ravaged the region, is attributable, in a strict statistical sense, to the decline in mortality rates. This includes a declining infant mortality rate from ca. 200/1000 births to around 50/1000. Much of the increase in population has been absorbed by temporary or permanent emigration to the urban centers of the region—Kinshasa, Luanda, Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, Mbanza Ngungu, Matadi, Boma, etc.—and overseas to Europe and North America. The population side of health is also shaped, especially in recent decades, by a significant rise in family planning, especially among young educated adults, who regularly limit the ideal (and actual) number of children to two or three, in the place of their grandmothers' six to eight.⁶ The beginning of the modern rise in population in the Lower Congo dates to the 1930s, following a catastrophic estimated 50 percent population loss during the Congo Free State period (1885-1908).⁷ This was due to spiking death rates from forced labor, flight of communities to protective lowland forest areas, and subsequent epidemic diseases.⁸

This picture of postcolonial health, cast against the global improvement in knowledge of, and medicines for, the major diseases of the tropics, is the half-full glass of this story. Sleeping sickness, the early twentieth century scourge of this region, is now well understood and is limited to occasional outbreaks, rarely leading to deaths, handled with special medicines and tsetse fly eradication methods. Malaria remains the most prevalent health challenge, but it is well understood and interventions are available, expert clinicians treat crisis cases, and medications are usually available. Pit latrines are the general rule in towns and villages of the area. Clean water sources—encased springs, wells, and urban water systems—are the rule, or at least understood to be essential in safeguarding public health. Continuing chronic diseases such as infant diarrhea, typhoid fever, respiratory infections, seasonal flu, protein malnutrition in some infants, and HIV/AIDS continue to take their toll on health of many. Tuberculosis has reappeared. Inhabitants who make their livings in rivers and streams, i.e., fishermen, are commonly infected with schistosomiasis.⁹ The half-empty glass side of the story is that the major diseases are still infecting people, causing their worst damage on the marginalized poor, especially children, and those at a distance from medical help.

Public Health and the Health Zones

The public health program, an outgrowth of the World Health Organization's 1980s Primary Health campaign, is a critical structural improvement in the overall health of the Lower Congo (and Kongo), as well as across the DRC. Under WHO auspices and the Ministry of Health, approximately three hundred Health Zones were created in the mid-1980s out of the somewhat haphazard set of mission, state, and private institutions. A Health Zone population of around fifty thousand inhabitants was to be served by many health posts (staffed by at least one nurse), which reported to and referred patients they could not treat to Medical Centers (that had at least one physician, nurses, a pharmacist, and aides). Each Health Zone is defined around a

central referral hospital which is staffed even more fully than the medical centers. The Health Zone system has become the dominant administrative structure for health and healthcare administration in Lower Congo, and in many regions across the DRC, as well as Angola and Congo. Since the collapse of the national ministry of health and the Zairian state in the 1990s, these Health Zones are administered by recreated Catholic and Protestant church medical organizations, resembling the late colonial and early postcolonial mission medical entities, but now run exclusively by Congolese physicians and administrators. Apart from some high profile inoculation campaigns—children’s vaccinations and vitamin supplements, polio eradication—all financial outlays are based on fee-for-service paid by the patients; or grants and NGO involvements that are secured by the necessarily-entrepreneurial heads of the medical services. This situation is ample demonstration of a neoliberal economy in which there are virtually no public funds available for healthcare.

Portraits of Postcolonial Healers

In medicine, “biomedicine” (the medicine of global medical-school-taught all Congolese doctors, nurses, lab technicians, and pharmacists, and related medicines and techniques) has become pervasive. In the Manianga region, one physician serves about six thousand inhabitants (there were twelve physicians for seventy thousand inhabitants), and is assisted by nurses and nurse-practitioners, medical assistants, lab technicians, and pharmacists. All of these practitioners are Congolese. The medical doctors were trained in several medical schools—mostly in Kinshasa—and overseas. Other medical workers were trained in a variety of regional educational institutions. The Free University of Luozi, for example, trained nurses and medical lab technicians.

For this brief presentation on contemporary healing in the Kongo region I will profile individuals whom I have met who typify the important work that has been done on health and healing, and the type of specialties they represent in the broader picture of “Kongo healing.” Given my field research in Lower Congo over the span of nearly half a century, I will offer several flashbacks to somewhat earlier—but still postcolonial—moments, and individuals, to establish an historical perspective revealing certain trends but also persisting patterns.

Among the fully qualified Kongo physicians, I begin with Dr. Joseph Kapita Bila, a prominent Kinshasa-based medical doctor. Earlier a cardiologist at Mama Yemo Hospital, he is noted for likely being the first professional physician to have recognized and begun to track the African AIDS epidemic in the 1980s.¹⁰ After leaving Mama Yemo, Dr. Bila took up practice in a clinic in Kinshasa-Gombe—the CMC Clinique BILAM—where he specializes in internal medicine, cardiology, and vascular conditions. He sees many prominent Congolese. Like many Bakongo, Dr. Bila has close ties to his home region and community. Thus, in addition to his urban clinic, he maintains a well-staffed and stocked clinic in his home village of Kisemi west of Luozi, which he visits several times per year.

Many other individual Congolese and Kongo physicians offer skillful and steadfast service in one of the network of official hospitals and medical centers in the face of severe budgetary and infrastructural challenges. One such individual is Dr. Rose Ndoda Kumbu, head of the Catholic hospital (medical center) in Luozi. I also mention the Protestant hospital at Sundi-Lutete, in the Manianga north, where a valiant effort is being made to continue the services of a

maternity and regional hospital, including surgery and general internal medicine. All three of these institutions—Kisemi, Luozi Catholic, Sundi-Lutete Protestant—were incorporated into the Health Zone structure as *Centre Medicales*, hierarchically mid-way between the *Hopitaux de Reference* (one per Zone) and the many *Postes de Santes*.

What Happened to the Medicine of the *Banganga*?

The healing traditions of the *banganga*, *bilongo*, and *min'kisi* are like shadows or memories in popular consciousness that may spring to life under special circumstances. Many of the *banganga* I had known and studied in the 1960s, such as Nzoamambu Oscar of Mbanza Mwembe, had passed away leaving no apprentices; or they had early in the twentieth century converted to Christianity and abandoned their practice.¹¹ This was the case with *nganga* Lemba Katula Davidi, who went to Nkamba in 1921 to see Simon Kimbangu the visionary *ngunza*-prophet with his own eyes.¹² He gave up his Lemba initiation, went to school, and became a teacher.¹³

Of the few of which I am aware who had an intensive apprenticeship as *nganga* and went on to practice one or more of the areas in which they were trained, and in turn trained their own apprentices, I note the example of a prominent North Kongo bone-setter, *nganga lunga* Makunza Zablon.¹⁴ He had been initiated in the early twentieth century to *minkisi* Ngombo (divination with a basket), N'kondi (conflict resolution and social sanction, using canine or anthropomorphic statues), Mpodi (the cupping horn to extract pollution from a body), and the very arduous *kinganga lunga*, bone setting and the healing of sprains. Because the colonial government and missionaries perceived the orthopedic work of the *nganga lunga* to be relatively free of ritual, they allowed him to practice unhindered. However, he ceased practicing the other *min'kisi* because of interference from missionaries and government officials. The ritual framework of his *kinganga lunga* was limited to a generic prayer before his massages and bone setting operations, and the medicinal and technical manipulations required to set fractures. Also abandoned was the initiation requirement to “fall” out of a palm tree and hit the ground without breaking bones or injuring muscles, so as to demonstrate an existential knowledge of this most common and serious injury to likely prospective clients. His apprentice Davidi carried on after his death, and I understand initiated his own apprentice who continues the center today.

Popular Knowledge, *Materia Medica*, and the Rise of the Pharmacists

Many Congolese, especially those who go to their gardens and fields to cultivate food crops, avail themselves of a wide variety of plant materials to protect their health. A poltice of a particular tree's leaves, rubbed over skin, is known to repel mosquitoes, thereby lessening the chance of malaria infection. Another plant's roots and leaves provide an effective tea for cough and upper respiratory infections. A few medicinal plants and other *materia medica* are available in local markets, but not nearly as voluminous as in the 1960s. Programs to valorize “traditional medicine” collapsed alongside other initiatives of the Zairian state in the 1980s and 1990s.

Pharmacies expanded like mushrooms in Western Equatorial Africa's cities and towns, however, as did the numbers of pharmacists and pharmaceutical merchants. The neoliberal economic climate and the absence of strict controls on imported drugs meant that any merchant

could buy and sell pharmaceutical products and turn a profit. Still, the popularity of, and belief in, the efficacy of medicinal plants and the high trust in a *nganga's* use of plants, meant that anyone who tried to work with plants could also gain a clientele. A few pharmacists with advanced training succeeded in subjecting local *materia medica* to scientific examination and the production of new plant-derived medicines. Montreal-trained pharmacist Flaubert Batangu Mpesa founded the *Centre de Recherche Pharmaceutique de Luozi* to develop patented medicines that eventually concentrated in the production of Manalaria and Manadiar, a prophylaxis and a cure for malaria.¹⁵ Batangu's initiatives, begun with dozens of medicinal plants, have achieved significant production and widespread marketing to over a million customers annually. His industry employs forty gardeners, lab technicians, chemists, administrators, and other workers. Batangu, former parliamentarian and currently rector of the *Université Kongo Mbanza Ngungu*, aligns his program with the WHO's malaria control and eradication guidelines that strive to develop medications that avoid drug resistance in mosquitoes and spirochetes, a serious problem with several generations of synthetic anti-malarials. By contrast, Batangu's work emphasizes the value of biochemically complex natural medications, even cocktail preparations, in the manufacture of his major anti-malaria drugs.¹⁶ In the process this group and others like it have engendered a strong consciousness of the significance of evolutionary theory in their understanding of how drug resistance works, and what to do to combat it effectively.

Divination: Why so Prominent?

The non-material dimension of the *nganga's* tradition has also retained its popularity, and seen significant creative evolution. Questions about misfortune continue to be asked by individuals and families. The examination of social and spiritual background — *mfiedulu*, from *fiela*, to examine, or *fimpa*, to research — is practiced by the occasional *nganga ngombo* diviner (or people who are called that), but mostly by family gatherings, *bangunza* inspirational prophet-seers, mainstream religious counselors, and academically-trained psycho- and socio-therapists. Marie Kukunda of the North Manianga was a particularly striking example of this type of divination in the 1960s.¹⁷ As a deaconess in the Protestant Church, but also a recognized *ngunza* (due to her visions, remarkable recovery from a near fatal disease), she used her Bible as an "instrument." Sometimes she simply sat back, closed her eyes, and pronounced her diagnosis and a recommendation for further steps to be taken in the case at hand. Although she has passed on without leaving an apprentice successor, others continue her style of investigative divination.

Investigative divination is controversial because it readily risks evoking counter-charges of false witchcraft accusation and may lead to serious outbreaks of violence. For this reason *bangunza* told me that they avoid revealing their analysis of relationships and causes to clients because it is too dangerous. Events of 2008 in Luozi still made my interlocutors skittish on the topic of investigative divination. In 2008, a series of investigative divinations by an *nganga ngombo* over sudden deaths led to the identification of several witch suspects, and their subsequent burning by mobs that morphed into anti-government riots in two local *secteur* posts. Regional authorities called in the national army special forces, and a confrontation with the riot-forces ensued, in which up to thirty of the rioters were killed. This unrest was associated with the nativist-nationalist movement *Bundu dia Kongo* (BDK) headed by national parliamentarian

Moanda Nsemi.¹⁸ After the “return to order” the BDK was banned as a political party, but the sentiment the BDK represents is still felt locally and across the Kongo region. My 2013 research did not provide the time to conduct a thorough investigation of divination practices, although I did learn of numerous instances where research into the causes of misfortune were conducted, mainly by *ngunza*.

A continuum of types of cases are brought to investigative divination in my Lower Congo postcolonial review and ethnographic research, ranging from simple aches and pains, to child-rearing dilemmas, to fights over property, to major inter-clan histories of dispute and ill will, to instances of power-mongering, that is recourse to mystical or magical revenge and protection. Prophet-diviners receive a host of aches and pains that they determine to be straight-forward, transparent, with “nothing else going on.” Marie Kukunda’s cases included “woman with pain in back” diagnosed as “a boil that will soon surface.” Marie prayed with her, blessed her, and sent her on her way. Her dictum of this case was “what is hidden will come to light; truth will prevail.” Another woman had “pain all over,” to which she sat with eyes closed before pronouncing “God will help you,” and blessed her with hands on chest and back. Other cases were identified as caused by troubling thoughts or anxiety, rather than anything specific. An elderly man was told his troubles were not witchcraft, but caused by too much drink; he should give up palm wine and change his ways. Sometimes infants with colds and fever were treated the same way, with a blessing and an injunction to go seek care and medication at the dispensary.

A further type of case is identified by investigative *ngunza*-diviners as caused by domestic or work-related conflict, or faulty parenting. This type of conflict is assumed by both the clientele and the diagnostician to cause affliction amongst those involved. Thus, a mother’s “pain all over” is linked to money a child has stolen. Marie urges the parents to confess a bad attitude toward their child, that their own parental manner has caused the situation. She administers a painkiller of the *kinsangula* plant to the mother, and tells her to visit a dispensary. Generally parents’ discord can cause children’s affliction or errant behavior, in her view. Some cases of sickness or misfortune are like links in a whole chain of problematic behaviors resulting in toxic relations. A young man has gotten in trouble in school through bad notes seen by authorities, is expelled, ends up in prison. Marie declares to the youth and his father that he has not been cursed—this is another case of an eighteen-year-old girl who is at odds with her mother over whether she may live independently in the house of her late grandmother, for whom she cared. Mother fears she is having affairs with boys. Marie urges the girl to ask forgiveness of her mother, and for the mother to accept the girl’s freedom, as she is nearly engaged. Another case involving sickness and an unfinished bride price is comparable to this one, in that the parents’ dispute of the appropriateness of their daughter’s relationship to a husband is interpreted to be at the root of her lingering illness. Another reading of this case could be that the failure of the suitor to complete the bride payment evokes the parents’ irritation, and causes everyone anxiety, misery, and sickness. Another woman asks for Marie’s blessing. In her divination she “sees” a basket, which the woman confesses has figured in an argument with a neighbor. Marie chastises her for engaging in such ungodlike behavior.

A more complex kind of case that appears before investigative *ngunza*-diviners combines disease or misfortune with conflict and recourse to mystical or ritual power. These kinds of

cases go well beyond a conflict that can be managed back to resolution and restoration. Diagnosis and response requires dealing with the affliction, the conflict, and the mystical loop that connects them. A young student with epileptic attacks is brought to Marie by his maternal uncle guardian. Marie's diagnosis is that his affliction is due to his having acquired a fetish for intelligence and force in fighting. This power has overwhelmed him, causing his distress. Her solution is for him to ask forgiveness of his uncle. Hidden thoughts and motives must be divulged; transparency can restore well-being. This is also the diagnosis of a case that involved lightning striking near a young man on a journey in search of work and having sold a used sewing machine gotten illicitly from a white man. The youth's aunts' prayers to ancestors are a hindrance to resolution of the case, says Marie. Proper parenting must be restored, and the sewing machine returned to its original owner. She blesses the youth, reads a Psalm, and encourages this family branch to reconcile with the other one from which the sewing machine was taken. A crisis over a shared "stolen" machine, a bolt of lightning, and invocation of ancestors raises the pitch of this case to a feverish, mystical level that Marie tries to calm with recommendations of reconciliation and restitution.

The most complex cases Marie and more recent diviner-prophets face are outright political conflicts that pit one clan against another over land, reproductive success, and control over one another's status.¹⁹ In one case a former slave clan remnant had fled their masters, leaving with a curse upon their land and women. The master clan began to dwindle, and were greatly concerned that this was caused by the curse. A prominent member of the former slave clan was sick with terminal cancer. Marie arranged meetings between the two clans, and a grand several day long gathering was held at which the curse was withdrawn, a counter blessing extended, and a grand feast celebrated the "descent of the *kodia* shell." In her divination of the cancer case Marie suggested that the sufferer had in his youth struck a twin, setting off a spiritual crisis that had festered and caused his disease. This diagnosis, directed at a spiritual or cosmic force — twins, dyadic embodied spirits — was far safer, from a political perspective, than accusations of witchcraft among the living. Multiple levels of linkage between individuals, clans, and spiritual beings and forces required an equally complex, multi-faceted series of rituals.

Healing, Defending, and Protecting Individuals and Society

The range of cases that Kukunda handled on her own are dealt with in many of the prophet churches with their rituals of healing, purification, and protection that seek to re-situate the individual or household in a more favorable relationship to spiritual power and social context. For example, the *Communauté du Saint Esprit en Afrique* (CSEA) "healing" begins with a question to the seated individual as to the source of distress. I am told that this is often counseling has already occurred prior to the beginning of worship. After the *ngunza* prays before the client, he begins to tremble to the accompaniment of heavily rhythmic singing-dancing by the congregation. The *ngunza* then lays hands on and finally performs a circular dance around the "patient." This motion is at first in a clockwise direction (to unwind the bad or troubled aura around the individual). Eventually, with the help of a white towel waving, he repeats the circular dancing, this time in a counter-clockwise rotation, all the while flapping the towel to create spirit, "*mpeve*." Thus the individual's protective aura is re-established or strengthened. The "weighing of the spirit" tests the strength of this spirit or aura around the individual.

Although this idea of the aura is deep Kongo, it is today interpreted as a manifestation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The work of protection and stabilization of individuals and groups also appears in modern psychotherapeutic initiatives. These too represent Kongo healing. Dr. Denis Bazinga, formerly of the Neuropsychiatric Institute of Kinshasa, is the founder of the *psychopalabre*, a form of group therapy or psychodrama in which participant patients role play familiar personal, family, and social dilemmas, and then discuss them with reference to psycho-social health. Begun in the 1960s, Bazinga continues his own clinical work under auspices of the Kimbanguist church, which hosts extensive educational, medical, and social services.²⁰ His successor Valentin Ngoma Malanda continues the therapy at the Neuropsychiatric Institute affiliated with the University of Kinshasa.²¹ The psychodrama is usually an extension or a facilitator of the “family therapy” that with the assistance of a professional therapist is able to resolve most dilemmas of internal conflict and personal distress.

Therapists have also used the family therapy version of traditional Kongo healing to deal with the epidemic of personal violence and rape that has been used by military forces in recent wars in Central Africa. Dr. Sidoni Matakot-Mianzenza, educational and clinical psychologist, has researched and worked to restore victims of violence, especially women who have experienced rape in the wars of the 1990s in Congo Brazzaville. In her therapeutic work she uses a combination of psychotherapy and traditional family therapy.²² This was identified in earlier scholarship as “kinship therapy.”²³ Women who experienced rape, according to Matakot-Mianzenza’s experience, responded best to the embrace of their own extended family or clan along with positive counseling. Sometimes this was accompanied by recourse to *banganga* or *bangunza* for exorcism and further protection from witchcraft. The persistent recourse in Kongo society to therapies or rituals designed to protect the individual from harm, to reintegrate or reconcile individuals within the kin group, suggest that many people in the Kongo, Western Central African region, expect this kind of therapeutic or ritual attention to help them deal with their traumas.

Another area of dramatic juxtaposition of scientific insight and social planning is the recourse to genetic testing to determine if a betrothed couple risks the fate of serial loss of young children as a result of them being homozygous sicklers. Growing in popularity particularly in circles of the educated elite, the process has seen a ripple effect into popular consciousness. Sickle cell anemia, or *Drepanocytose*, affects many people in Western Equatorial Africa. Sickle cell anemia is a hereditary condition given by the heterozygous gene carrying father and mother (both with A/S) to some of their children. The statistical chances of such parents transmitting the condition to their offspring is 25 percent for A/A (non carrier, non sickler), 50 percent A/S (carrier, and potential transmitter, but with a sickling condition that gives some immunity against malaria), and 25 percent S/S (full blown sickler, susceptible to anemia and other crises, usually early death if not carefully managed; no cure available). Thus the offspring have a one in four chance of being S/S. In the Western Congo –DRC— fully 30 percent of the population is A/S.²⁴

Dr. Joswe Mbaku, professor of psychology of the *Université Libre de Luozi*, specializes in public health awareness about sickle cell anemia. In a pamphlet that he distributes to any and all persons in his entourage and classes, he explains the symptoms and life chances of those

affected. Dr. Mbaku's tract offers the following treatment: at home, the pain of attacks may be diminished by keeping in well ventilated areas, with stable temperature; frequent drinking of water, eating a good and varied diet, avoiding strenuous exercise. Medical treatments include very expensive drugs; blood transfusions may be necessary in certain cases. The tract concludes by emphasizing that a long life is possible for S/S sicklers and that their parents should be encouraged to put and keep them in school. They have a future in occupations that do not require strenuous physical activity such as some professions, for example. Psychological counseling and moral support are very important elements of leading a reasonably normal life as a sickler.

But the perhaps greater impact of this rising consciousness of the genetics of sickle cell anemia and the sickling gene is in the way it has affected marriage politics and clan alliance negotiations, and the fates of the youths who fall in love and wish to marry. Before there was any consciousness of sickling as a hereditary condition, the serial deaths of young children that is the most telling consequence upon families were usually thought to be caused by an unfinished, inadequately paid-up, bride price, or witchcraft envy of the parents or close kin. The importance of the alliance bond between families was so great that failure to do it adequately brought to the fore undercurrents of miserliness and jealousy that were thought to cause sterility or children dying. As awareness grew of the nature of the condition, through public health education, it took the form of a vague sense that something was amiss in the biological makeup of the parents. But without an adequate understanding of genetics, this awareness was limited to identifying certain families, or kin groups, as somehow flawed resulting in their children dying.²⁵

With more schooling, especially in the biological sciences, and with the training of many lab technicians and the advent of numerous Congolese medical doctors and nurses, a fuller comprehension of sickle cell anemia has emerged in Kongo society, and in this wider region of Africa so heavily affected by malaria. Today genetic testing is becoming a prerequisite for an acceptable marriage negotiation. If the couple are both discovered to be A/S, or have survived to marriageable age as S/S, medical counselors and psychologists routinely advise them to break off their engagement and find other partners. This introduces a whole new source of tensions. Those who refuse to break off their engagement are asked to sign a document informing them of the likely consequences and that they fully understand what they are confronting.

The emergence into public consciousness of a genetically transmitted condition as severe and life changing as the S gene, introduces new issues of identity, life choices, and moral considerations. Tampering with God-created nature or having to break off a cherished relationship may require a new kind of moral framework. Furthermore, to complicate matters even more, medical researchers suggest that there are multiple alleles (an allele is one of two or more alternative forms of a gene that arise by mutation and are found at the same place on a chromosome) in the genetic picture and that more refined testing can demonstrate gradations of severity in sickling ranging from extremely likely problems to less severe problems.²⁶ The consciousness of a sickling propensity introduces the kinds of ambiguities that have been confronted in genetic testing for other fetal defects. Science and spirit are so intertwined here that a sophisticated moral and emotional compass is required at each stage of this complex condition.

Causality and Personhood

Within the broad cultural field of misfortunes, a distinction is made in Kongo thought, and much more widely in Central and Western Africa, between those misfortunes that are “of God,” (*kimbevo kia Nzambi*) and those that are “of man” (*kimbevo kia muuntu*). The first is a sickness that is in the natural order of things, or just happens. The second is caused by human ignorance, an unfortunate verbal assault made in a fit of anger, or in the worst case, intentionally caused physical or mystical harm to do deliberate injury through misfortune or sickness. The second corresponds to the very widely-distributed presence of the proto-Bantu verb *kuloka*, or *lok*, the power of words, or *dok*, the one from whom such words emanate. Clearly, the nature of the therapy sought will differ depending on which of the causes, or combination of causes cited here, is considered to have been in play. If an individual suffers a malaria attack with no attending suspected human cause, a visit to the hospital or clinic is in order, and the straightforward theory of the spirochete carried by the anopheles mosquito will apply. If the episode passes with treatment, then the case was confirmed to be “God-caused.” If, however, the patient relapses or the disease becomes chronic or issues of conflict surround the case, either suspected or confirmed by evidence or divination, then the clinical treatment may be complimented by a further investigation—*fiela*, *fimpa*—of possible human issues that are in play in the life of the afflicted. As research on extended cases in the Manianga revealed years ago, there may be a shifting etiological understanding within the therapy managing group or network, including the individual sufferer, or amongst a group of common sufferers. That is, a case or affliction that at one phase may be agreed to be “human-caused” may at another point come to be seen as “of God” if new evidence emerges.²⁷

Clinical, theological, and cultural explanations have been given for this causal logic that entertains a wider field than the individual, and invisible agents as well as scientific empiricism. My scholarly interest in personhood in Kongo therapeutic logic was aroused first when I tried to make sense of *nganga nkisi* Nzoamambu’s medical cosmology. The diagnostic gloss “*kimbevo kia muuntu*” (sickness of man) corresponded in his dynamic scheme to a sequence of ever more severe reactions of the heart: palpitations, wild beating, “fear in the heart,” “madness.” Such signs in a sufferer, especially if demonstrated sequentially over time, were evidence of “something else going on.” This entire model I called Nzoamambu’s “theory of the person.”²⁸ But this theory of the person is more widespread than one clever twentieth century *nganga nkisi*. It resonates in more widespread writing and practice in Central Africa and beyond. Within Kongo history, MacGaffey has summed up his understanding of the power of *min’kisi* as “the personhood of objects.”²⁹ The *nkisi* mirrors the entire scope of relations of the *nganga*, the client, and the “other” of threatened aggression, society and nature. These relations combine metonymic and metaphoric allusions, as well as artistry in the harnessing of unique styles and surprises. In any event, the person in Kongo thinking and living is often different, more expansive and complex, than the post-Enlightenment Cartesian Christian bounded autonomous individual of current Western psychological and medical construction.³⁰

The contours of this unique Kongo, Western Equatorial African, personhood include a number of aspects of identity, rights, and believed associations. There are the rights at birth to one’s mother’s lineage, its land, other privileges and obligations, focused on the relationship to one’s *nkazi*, maternal uncle, who holds proprietary rights over his sister’s children. An

individual also holds deep ties to father and father's kindred that are associated with intellectual and spiritual powers. A kind of bilateral identity ensues that has within it networks with other individuals and roles. The identity of every individual harbors the alliances sealed by bride price payments by father's kin to mother's kin, and the reciprocal gestures, including blessings that flow along the social channel of such alliances. Yet the individual is still in some sense original and autonomous. Names, for example, are independent of these lineage/clan associations, and may be changed by life course transitions or personal whim.³¹ But it is this wider fan of kin, alliances, business and political associations, and echoes to the natural world that is invoked when suspicions of "something else going on" are raised in connection with sickness or other misfortune.

Healing the Whole Person: Biomedicine Joins *Kingunza*

The young doctor Bakima Luyobisa, who passed his medical school exams recently in Kinshasa, is also an accomplished and dedicated *ngunza*, prophet. We met him in Boma and he gave us a tour of the *Hôpital Général de Référence* where he is interning for a year, doing specializations of pediatrics, surgery, and internal medicine. On Sunday morning he was wearing another white gown, that of the *Communauté du Saint Esprit en Afrique*, with white hat and long cloth with the wide belt characteristic of this church's uniform. On the table of the single room he shared with three other interns there were several thick medical texts or manuals. At the Sunday service he had a KiKongo Bible and hymnbook. In the Bible were the notes of a course he had taken on traditional African healing. I had only suspected his full immersion in two so different healing traditions, but conversations with him indicated how he integrated the two in his thinking, his persona, and his career. Just as he was now a diploma-holding medical intern, so he was qualified to practice all the rites of the CSEA: the blessing, the healing, the *dumuna* weighing of the spirit. After completing his secondary school in the scientific track, with a specialization in chemistry and biology, he had taken his medical training at the Faculty of Human Medicine of the Simon Kimbangu University in Kinshasa, with his graduate license in medicine in June 2013. He had chosen this university not for its spiritual teaching or healing—which he said they do not teach—but for its high quality professors and well-equipped laboratories.

Bakima emphasized how different the two healing traditions are. Biomedicine offers a narrow focus on a disease and its treatment or on the function of particular organs. One learns the properties of medicines, how to apply them, as we saw on Sunday afternoon when he accompanied us to a pharmacy in Boma and prescribed two antibiotics for Mrs. Janzen's incipient urinary tract infection. Spiritual healing addresses the whole person in context, and offers assurance, contact with the Holy Spirit, protection, and harmony. There is a condition for its efficacy, however. One needs to believe in it. His training and practice was very much Christian, with reference to the life of Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit in healing. However in his knowledge of African healing he spoke of its herbal and shamanic dimensions. He also said that many of the CSEA rites and practices were distinctly Kongo in nature, and were rooted in the work of prophets as early as Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita in the eighteenth century and other well known later prophets.³²

Because they are so different, the two traditions of biomedicine and spiritual healing are complimentary. They fit together in his perspective, and to a degree in his practice. Many

patients he deals with expect treatment for their whole person, even if it is only a word of encouragement and hope for their suffering. When sick, Kongo patients seek understanding of the source of an illness and the hope of a counterforce to oppose or treat the condition, and to protect them. He said that “we young physicians” are experimenting with ways to offer a more complete healing at our hospitals and clinics.

We discussed whether spiritual healing might lead to wrong ideas about the scientific knowledge of diseases. He discounted this, pointing out that there is a big difference between ignorance or lack of knowledge of diseases, and spiritual healing. Spiritual healing is all about the whole person’s well-being in life’s circumstances, and receiving the benediction of a spirit-filled affirmation from the healer, family, and community. Since the CSEA practices healing, they claim that they remove the nefarious influence of bad spirits (by the healer circling the patient in a clockwise direction) and reinforcing good spirit (by circling in a counterclockwise direction), and through counseling.

We discussed the controversial practice of the examination of relationships and individuals who might be at cause in a sickness. He reiterated that the CSEA’s policy prohibits this. One of their senior prophets told me that doing *kufiela* is beyond the domain of religion. Yet the healer has to know what is going on in the life of a sufferer, but does not have to reveal it. Other prophets in this tradition, or in the prophetic tradition in general, however, have done this, what the *banganga ngombo* used to do, and the few that are around still do, and many people demand to know. The *mfiedulu* process presupposes the power of anger and ill will upon the health of persons. So the CSEA allows for the reality of witchcraft, anger, and other negative emotions, and they heal and bless people so affected. But they do not officially dig around in such matters, nor help with vengeance seeking that used to be done by *banganga nkisi*, and may still occur. But they do bring the Holy Spirit in to protect such people, and to give them succor.

Finally, I asked Bakima if he could see himself opening a clinic with “spiritual healing and biomedicine” as its announced practice. In theory, yes. But the main hurdles would be the licensing aspect, to get governmental acceptance. Some of his colleagues among the “young doctors” look askance at his dual interest, but there are other young physicians in Congo who share this passion for treating the whole person by combining biomedicine and spiritual healing.

Conclusions

This presentation has yielded a number of broader observations about the direction of health and healing in Kongo society. On a whole series of fronts scientific knowledge is supplanting earlier popular understandings and the expertise of the *banganga*. But in many instances the manner in which this new knowledge is used and prioritized is done in the interest of reinforcing even deeper Kongo social and moral values.

Biochemistry, pharmacology, genetics, and evolutionary biology have become central in the treatment of major diseases and adaptive conditions such as malaria. This is extended to the understanding of the sickling gene and why there is increased pressure on betrothed couples to seek genetic counseling to determine if they are both A/S heterozygous, in which case they should separate. This measure emphasizes the importance of the deep Kongo value of viable

reproductive alliances and the desire to avert the child death syndrome that sickling is now understood to produce.

The broader, more inclusive, more widely-connected, personhood of Kongo thought and society harbors suppositions about the fates and fortunes in which “of God” and “human-caused” etiologies co-exist. This explains the manner in which God, the ancestors, nature spirits, and other individuals sometimes taking the form of animals, may occupy the same space as more narrowly-focused scientific theorems.

The gradual realization on the part of ritualists, psycho- and socio-therapists, of a more relational personhood in many Kongo settings, acknowledges a more inclusive social structure, and a keen appreciation of the importance of the protective aura around the person, and the critical role it is believed to play in health and well-being.

Western/global research and academic disciplinary perspectives in the hands of Kongo or Congolese activists embrace and try to reconstitute traditional Kongo instituted practices and perspectives—e.g., the *psychopalabre* or psychodrama integrating psychoanalytic “group therapy” with Kongo *nsamu/lukongolo* family therapy; Miatokot’s clinical psychologically reconstituted “kinship therapy” for women’s war trauma. Batangu Mpesa’s pharmaceutical products drawn from *banganga* plant knowledge are subjected to laboratory testing, and interpreted through evolutionary hypotheses to withstand drug resistance tendencies of mosquitoes and spirochetes.

The story of health and healing in the Kongo region of Western Equatorial Africa illustrates the distinctive shape of knowledge in a unique and unfolding historical pattern of the human community, set in a particular—and challenging—environment to which that human community is continually adapting.

Notes

- 1 For the 1960s fieldwork, see for example, Janzen 1978.
- 2 I am indebted to the following individuals for having assisted in developing and administering this questionnaire *The Social Reproduction of Health / La reproduction sociale de la santé / Mtombuka a zungu mu mavimpi*: Professor Dianzungu for translating my English statement of the project and letter of introduction into French and KiKongo; Mbuta Luyobisa Jackson for translating the questionnaire from French into KiKongo, and for administering it to many of the households after we tested it and conducted a number together; Ndiongono kwa Nzambi Marceline for assisting in the composition of supplementary questions on family planning, for translating this into KiKongo, and for administering this supplemental part to women in the sample of eighteen to forty-five years of age.
- 3 Ngemba Jeanbenoit, a community health activist, nurse-infirmier Mansinsa Dianzenza Delvin, and secretary Mbasani Veronique provided important and detailed information on the work of the Luozi Health Zone, one of three in the Territory, of three hundred in the entire Democratic Republic of the Congo. Dr. Alfred Monameso of the Protestant Medical Organization (CEC) provided important information on the operation of the Luozi Health

- Zone; he shared the CEC's Vision 2017: Plan Strategique 2013-2017.
- 4 The research project "The Social Reproduction of Health in Lower Congo" was generously supporting by a Senior Research Scholar Fellowship from the Fulbright Foundation of the International Institute of Education.
 - 5 An initial listing of names will not do justice to all the persons who helped. Diallo Lukwamusu provided intellectual reflection and logistical assistance whenever needed; Celestin Lusiana provided ethnographic assistance at times, and offered good conversation on many topics that came up; Thomas Kisolokele was my social conscience, etiquette adviser, mediator in a range of contacts I wished to make, and general conversationalist; Mama Jacqueline was our household host, chef, overseer, and gate-keeper, with ready and firm guidance on every occasion; Pierre Mayimona was our genius of a chauffeur-mechanic who not only kept our Hillux running and drove us all over from Kinshasa to Boma, and northward to Nsundi-Lutete, but was our bodyguard in those moments when that was needed.
 - 6 Author's 2013 research in Luozi and wider archival and anecdotal information.
 - 7 Although numerous historians and demographers have sought to establish accurate population figures for the Kongo region prior to the twentieth century, most published accounts of conditions before 1930 are estimates only until actual demographic studies in the 1930s. See Sautter 1966 and Trolli and Dupuy 1933.
 - 8 A more nuanced reconstruction of population in the entire KiKongo-speaking region would need to recognize the distinctive patterns of Portuguese, Free State, Belgian, and French colonial policies and practices. This paper is mainly based on the middle region along the Congo River.
 - 9 Listing from Luozi Health Zone 2002-2013, *Maladies principales*; the Janzen study intensive sample.
 - 10 Kapita Bila 1988, cited in Iliffe 2006, pp. 12, 67-68, 97.
 - 11 See Janzen 1978, chapter 10, featuring Nzoamambu's anatomy, cosmology, and herbaria, and his theory of the person.
 - 12 Simon Kimbangu emerged as a prophet in 1921 in his home community of Nkamba west of Thysville (today Mbanza Ngungu), and for several months eluded the colonial authorities. Thousands of pilgrims like Katula came to see and hear him, drawn by reports of miracles. He was finally arrested and spent a lifetime in prison in Elizabethville (Lubumbashi). In the 1950s, his followers, many of whom spent their lifetimes in internal exile, returned and brought his mortal remains to Nkamba (-Jerusalem) to establish a holy city around his tomb, and the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu. The church is a major presence in Congo and the wider region, with many congregations, schools, a university in Kinshasa, social services, and a significant economic and political presence. For an insider-European view see Martin 1976; and an anthropological perspective within the context of historical Kongo prophetism, see MacGaffey 1983.
 - 13 See Janzen 1982, pp. 86-7, 90, 187-200.

- 14 Janzen 1978, p. 51, Plates 7, 8, 9.
- 15 See Janzen 2012, pp. 123-24.
- 16 Batangu-Mpesa 2009.
- 17 Kukunda's working style is covered in Janzen 1978 pp. 107-11.
- 18 Territoire de Luozi 2008, pp. 30-33.
- 19 See Janzen 1978 pp. 203-09; the grand *lukutukunu* gathering shown on Plate 18.
- 20 Interviewed by University of Kansas graduate student Heather Aldersey during her research in 2012 on disability support networks in Kinshasa.
- 21 Interviewed by Heather Aldersey 2012; also, Devey 2007.
<http://www.congoforum.be/fr/interviewdetail.asp?id=24420&interviewselected> (last accessed 4/29/14).
- 22 Matokot-Mianzenza 2003.
- 23 Janzen 1978.
- 24 Mbaku n.d.
- 25 Historian Kimpianga Mahaniah has written a history of his own lineage, with dense S/S frequency, that was formerly accused of harboring witchcraft its midst, occasioning anger, estrangement, and poison ordeals. In an entire chapter devoted to this he seeks to explain the genetics of sickling to a KiKongo readership. Kimpianga Mahaniah 2001, pp. 54-56.
- 26 An allele is one of two or more alternative forms of a gene that arise by mutation and are found at the same place on a chromosome.
- 27 Janzen 1978.
- 28 Janzen 1978, pp. 169 ff.
- 29 MacGaffey 2000. pp. 78 ff.
- 30 For other applications of the notion of personhood in Central Africa see discussions of war trauma in Janzen and Janzen 2000, pp. 203 ff. For further elaboration of the notion of personhood in the history of Western thought and medical anthropology, see Janzen 2002 pp. 137-48.
- 31 Janzen 2002, p. 141.
- 32 For Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita, see Thornton 1998.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Claire L. Adida. 2014. *Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 175 pp.

Within contemporary African societies, why are some immigrants able to gain status as indigenous citizens of the nation while others remain foreigners despite residence throughout generations? Claire L. Adida's *Immigrant Exclusion and Insecurity in Africa: Coethnic Strangers* is a story about variations in immigrant integration within the fabric of the African nation-state. Though shared cultural traits may facilitate immigrant integration in the urban environs of industrialized nations, Adida instead finds that important indigenous and immigrant community leaders within Africa's urban frameworks face greater insecurity when immigrant populations do share cultural traits with host societies.

In particular, indigenous traders do not want their trade networks overrun by immigrants with shared ethnic, linguistic, or religious traits, while immigrant community patrons do not want to lose power and influence over a non-assimilated immigrant community. High-overlap immigrants thus face greater exclusion on the part of their hosts, and experience heightened cultural awareness, increasing the distance between immigrants and hosts, as facilitated by immigrant community leaders. Immigrants with less cultural overlap to host societies are inherently more distinct, and host societies and community leaders have less to fear since the immigrant community cannot easily assimilate.

This book follows two ethnic groups, Nigerian Yorubas and Nigerian Hausas, in three West African cities: Cotonou (Benin), Niamey (Niger), and Accra (Ghana). These sites are specifically chosen so that each group faces alternating high cultural overlap with the host society (high for Yorubas in Cotonou, high for Hausas in Niamey) and such that Yorubas experience a high religious overlap in Accra. Adida uses survey instruments to capture both immigrant exclusion, via host attitudes and behaviors toward immigrants, and immigrants' attachments to a distant community of origin in Nigeria. In addition, Adida interviewed more than one hundred Hausa and Yoruba community leaders, as well as Nigerian victims of Ghana's 1969 Alien Compliance Order.

Large-scale migration has been a defining aspect of the African landscape, though growing economic competition translates into immigrants' increasingly stressful interactions with autochthonous hosts. Though both internal and international immigrants can face exclusion, Adida's work is limited to capturing variation in local reactions to international immigrant communities in urban areas. Similarly, Adida introduces her readers to the concept of immigrant exclusion, potentially escalating to expulsion, as an Africa-wide problem, but her theory does not address the differences between African and non-African immigration. In fact, from her theory, non-African immigrants would typically classify as low-cultural overlap immigrants, unless they share religious similarities with the host population, and should thus experience less exclusion as compared to high-overlap immigrants. But, as Adida recognizes, non-African immigrants have faced expulsions (such as the expulsion of Asians in Uganda, of

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/pdfs/v15i3a6.pdf>

white Europeans in Zimbabwe, etc.). This side of the immigrant inclusion/exclusion story does not feature in this work.

Another interesting point of debate concerns Adida's measure of host-society exclusion. Host respondents were surveyed whether they or their country (wo)men, respectively, would vote for a <Hausa><Yoruba> if he were standing for president. The discussion this question merits is whether individuals might disapprove of an immigrant community member rising to the office of the presidency without disapproving their becoming a member of the nation. Further, if host respondents approved of one immigrant's group member becoming president more than another immigrant's group member, might it be that immigrant groups have closer ties with one political party than another? In Ghana, for instance, Hausas are strongly associated with the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and Yorubas may have some ties with the opposing New Patriotic Party (NPP), evidenced by the recent formation of a NPP Yoruba Caucus. If so, the political dispositions of the indigenous respondents might color their response to the presidential survey item.

Finally, as Africanist readers, we felt inclined to point out the cultural and context specificities of each of Adida's cases as needing consideration when conducting a study on such potentially fuzzy conceptions of identity. However, as political scientists, we are also deeply impressed by the way the argument is able to capture a very-hard-to-research phenomenon (i.e. immigration and migration politics), from both the perspective of the host society and the immigrant's experience, in one fell swoop.

Adida's systematic work on immigrant and host society attitudes makes an essential contribution to a difficult-to-study topic within African Studies. Follow-up analyses might consider changes in immigrant group assimilation over time, the role technology plays in immigrants' attachment with homelands, and the impact of inter-marriage on immigrant-host society relationships.

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Oswald Almasi, Michael David Fallon, and Nazish Pardhani Wared. 2014. *Swahili Grammar for Introductory and Intermediate Levels*. New York: University Press of America, Inc. 452 pp.

This book is the most detailed and comprehensive volume on Swahili grammar currently available. It is a welcome addition to the growing texts on Swahili language and a valuable collection for Swahili scholars worldwide. The writers, Oswald Almasi, Michael David Fallon, and Nazish Pardhani Wared have collectively presented an in-depth survey of every aspect of Swahili grammar. It is intended for university students or language scholars whose objective is to gain mastery of Swahili grammar from the introductory to intermediate levels. It is specifically devoted to grammar, with a few cultural notes here and there.

The first chapter focuses on general but brief information on the Swahili language, where it is spoken, the dialects and their location, how Swahili is related to other African languages, and its ranking in world languages. The alphabet and sound pronunciation is extensively addressed with equivalent sounds in English language presented for easy identification. The book is divided into thirty-nine chapters with each chapter focusing on the introduction of a grammar

concept, its linguistic rules, numerous examples with their translations, and practice exercises and their answers. At the end of each chapter is a glossary of new words used in the chapter. The grammar ranges from the simplest concepts to the more complex ones; however they are not arranged in chronological order in accordance to difficulty of learning the concept. For example, the “Swahili Noun Class System” is introduced fairly early, in Chapter 7, while “Numbers” come in Chapter 18, and “Days, Months, and Dates” come in Chapter 21.

Some of the concepts covered are greetings, tenses and their negations, numerals and telling time, pronouns and their prefixes, noun classes and their agreements, adjectives, possessives, colors and interrogatives, etc. More complex grammar such as verb conjugation, adverbs, relative pronouns, relative of manner, subjunctive and conditional and habitual tenses are introduced later. Idiomatic expressions, proverbs and reported speech are also included. Chapter 35, titled “Common Swahili Question and Answers,” is interestingly presented in the form of dialogues on common topics such as “Meeting Someone,” “Conversation between Neighbors,” “At the Airport,” and “Travelling to East Africa.” These dialogues are designed to reflect realistic scenarios in a typical Swahili speaking community. The questions that follow are targeted at testing comprehension through the use of grammatical concepts introduced in the preceding chapters. Additionally, the writers have included plenty of charts, which not only simplify grammatical concepts and their application across the different noun classes, but also enhance students’ visualization of the bigger picture of Swahili language structure. The appendix has three pages of important grammar charts, which are followed by twenty-five pages of Swahili-English Dictionary.

Since the text confines itself to grammar, it cannot function sufficiently as a class text for teaching all the language skills, especially reading, comprehension, writing essays, and cultural understanding. It will function excellently as a supplementary text alongside other texts with reading comprehension and cultural notes. It is ideal, however, for the independent student who is studying on his/her own, or as a resource for the graduate student specializing in linguistic analysis, and also for the avid Swahili language teacher. Users will appreciate what is being said because everything is translated into English. It will be an invaluable addition to any library that desires to expand its collection on foreign languages.

There are a few minor errors. It is suggested that *Habari* greeting can pluralize to *Habarini* (p. 28) when greeting many people. *Habari* belongs to the N noun class, which does not take plurals and it is usually used with a possessive to denote plural address. Thus, *Habari zenu?* (how are you all?) with *Habari zetu nzuri* (we are all fine) would be the response. In Chapter 31 on “Ka-narrative tense” the negation seems problematic (p. 327). The sentence *Nilinunua samaki nikapika kwa mafuta, tukala* is negated as *Nilinunua samaki, nikapika kwa mafuta, tusile*. The trend has been to negate the first action, which in turn negates everything else. On “Collective Nouns” (p. 394) it is suggested that *mama, baba, samaki* can pluralize like *rafiki-marafiki* and hence become *mamama, mababa, masamak*. From observation, Swahili speakers would usually use *Akina*, a form of showing plural for relationship nouns in N Class. In this respect it would be *akina mama* or *akina baba*, while *Masamaki* would be the pluralized augmentative of *Jisamaki* just as it would be with *jitu – majitu*. Overall, however, the minor errors should not distract from a well-written and comprehensive Swahili grammar book.

Rose Sau Lugano, *University of Florida*

Edward A. Alpers. 2009. *East Africa and the Indian Ocean*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers. 242 pp.

Edward A. Alpers' collected volume serves two purposes. First, it examines the significance of the Indian Ocean for eastern Africa. Second, it acts as a survey of the historian's four decade career. While the material presented here is all previously published, its compilation into a single collection serves both of these purposes well. Alpers discussion of history is one grounded in place, literally and figuratively. Much like a geographic study, Alpers is consistently concerned with the uniqueness and contexts of the places about which he writes. More figuratively, his attempts to place East African history in a larger Indian Ocean history serve to reveal important patterns of influence that have shaped this region.

The volume is split into three sections, defined by geographic extent, each consisting of three chapters. The first of these sections focuses on the western Indian Ocean. This is the broadest geographic scale Alpers covers; this serves the book's opening well as these chapters contextualize the larger region for the more specific writings to come. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on early trade networks in the region. Chapter 1 discusses the role(s) of Hindu merchants from the Gujarat region in the ivory trade. This discussion crosses three centuries beginning with sixteenth century, covering a period of competition and conflict between and across Portuguese and Arab trade routes. This is the widest timescale Alpers writes of, his focus becoming increasingly more narrow through the later chapters. Chapter 2 reproduces one of the least read items in the volume--a conference paper discussing trade in foodstuffs across the western Indian Ocean. This topic is notable, as Alpers himself points out it has been underdeveloped and often neglected in historical literature on the region. Chapter 3 takes a different approach, presenting the islands of the region as a focus and arguing they should be the driving point of study, opposed to the more common focus on continental locations in the region.

In contrast with Chapter 3, the second section acquiesces to larger scholarly emphases and focuses specifically on coastal East Africa. Despite this contradiction, the section segues well from the previous one, leading readers through a discussion of what is broadly conceived of as the Swahili coast. Chapter 4 examines and positions Muqdisho in a nexus of Busaidi Zanzibar, commercial networks (again with a focus on trade), and a broad urban tradition of the region. This nexus, Alpers argues, presents a city in contrast with the traditional nomadic Somali experience. The following chapter dovetails from this discussion by examining the indigenous textile industry in the city, serving to indirectly illustrate and support the more sweeping ideas of the previous chapter. Finally, Chapter 6 switches focus and discusses a women's spirit possession cult from the mid-nineteenth century. The takeaway of this chapter is the importance of cultural networks that interlink regions and serve to advance and evolve cultural traditions. While itself a worthwhile discussion, this chapters placement is the one notable question mark in the book, as it is such a radical departure from this section's other two topics. The third and final part of the book focuses on the Mozambique Channel. These chapters are the most complex, examining this channel as a zone of activity involving intricate networks of politics, religion, commerce, and family. Much like the subject matter of Chapter 2, this topic is somewhat understudied and Alpers accordingly underscores its importance here. Chapter 7 returns once again to trade networks, examining the Indian Ocean slave trade through the example of Malagasy raids of coastal eastern Africa. Chapter 8 focuses solely on the islands,

exploring the relationship between Mozambique and the Comoros. Finally, Chapter 9 closes the book by testing the concept of littoral society in the Mozambique Channel context.

Volumes of this nature are important. A survey of Alpers' career would be worthwhile from any scholar, but Alpers own selection and compilation of the work he thought to be most noteworthy, compiled using a framework of his own design, serves to give readers the most complete look at this overview of his work. Individual reader's utility of this volume will vary based on their previous experience with Alpers' scholarship. However, when considering the importance of his topics and the longevity and evolution of his thinking evident in these pages, even Alpers' closest colleagues will likely find value here.

Ryan Z. Good, *University of Florida*

Pascal Buresi and Hicham El Allaoui. 2013. *Governing the Empire: Provincial Administration in the Almohad Caliphate (1224-1269)*. Leiden: Brill. 538 pp.

In *Governing the Empire: Provincial Administration in the Almohad Caliphate (1224-1269)* Pascal Buresi and Hicham El Allaoui embark on the ambitious task of presenting a detailed account of the administrative strategies and shifts of the Almohad Caliphate. While less frequently addressed by scholars than the Abbasids or Umayyads, the Almohad Caliphate was the ruling dynasty of Morocco and Al-Andalus for over a century (1121-1269). As such, the work of Buresi and El Allaoui represents an important discussion of a significant dynasty which has been hitherto under analyzed. Despite their brilliance in articulating the administrative structures and strategies of the Almohads, they fall short in terms of situating this group within the broader history of the Caliphate.

The major purpose of this work is to provide insight into the internal workings of the Almohad administration. Issues such as how and why individual appointments were decided, decisions to centralize power or rely on local governance, and techniques used to establish the political and religious legitimacy of the Caliphate (and Caliph himself) are at the forefront of this analysis. In this regard, the author's succeed in brilliant fashion. Their ability to gather enough administrative documents to address all of these issues in detail over a period of forty-five years is nothing short of impressive. Simply put, the reader walks away from this text with a strong understanding of how and why Almohad administrative practice evolved over time.

Another strength of the book is the authors' detailed explanation of their translation of primary Arabic documents. To be sure, the attention paid to the nuances of translating twelfth and thirteenth century documents could be perceived as tedious by those who have no knowledge of the language. However, for scholars and students who understand the frequency with which the translation of Arabic documents is either explained poorly, or not at all, the in-depth discussion offered in this work is a breath of fresh air. This thorough explanation (not to mention that quality of the translation itself) allows the language and context of the original documents to be preserved to the maximum extent possible.

Despite their success in analyzing the internal dynamics of the Almohad Caliphate, the authors largely ignore the broader institution history and context of the Caliphate. While the main purpose of the book was an administrative analysis of the Almohads, their structures and

strategies did not develop without precedent. The authors do a reasonable job discussing this in relation to the Almoravid dynasty which ruled over Morocco and Al-Andalus from 1040–1147. However, the authors fail to adequately discuss the adoption of tactics and institutions developed by foundational dynasties such as the Umayyads and the Abbasids. They mention at the outset that the Almohad “version of power was closely tied to the history of the Umayyad Caliphate” (p. 7). However, this notion is not explored in a meaningful way anywhere in subsequent chapters. The lack of attention to this relationship prevents the reader from being able to evaluate the position of the Almohads in relation to their predecessors in other geographic areas.

For scholars of the Caliphate, Buresi and El Allaoui’s book offers a useful contribution to the existing literature. The relative lack of attention the Almohads have renders the authors’ efforts an important step in developing a holistic history of the Caliphate. Their ability to use primary source documents to draw conclusions about the Almohad administration is nothing short of impressive. And, while the lengthy discussions of translation can at times give the book a tedious feel, this ultimately affords readers familiar with the Arabic language valuable insight into the character of the original documents. Perhaps the lone drawback of the book is its lack of attention to the Almohad’s place within the broader history of the Caliphate. Precedent for the importance of this can be found in Fred Donner’s work on the Umayyads, as well as Hugh Kennedy’s work on the Abbasids. While the lack of this context does not take away from the authors’ analysis of the Almohad administration, it does limit the more general utility of the study. To frame this in a more positive light, the lack of broader context offers other scholars the opportunity to expand on the impressive base which has been established by Buresi and El Allaoui.

Justin A. Hoyle, *University of Florida*

John A. Chesworth and Franz Kogelmann, eds. 2014. *Shari’a in Africa Today: Reactions and Response*. Leiden: Brill. 281 pp.

The subject of *shari’a* in Africa has attracted the interest of a number of scholars from diverse fields due to the resurgence of religion in the public space today. John A. Chesworth and Franz Kogelmann draw together papers that contribute to an in-depth study into some aspects of *shari’a* in Africa, except that the countries are limited. The book is divided into four sections, one each on Sudan, Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania. Written in eleven chapters, all the contributors used ethnographic research. Chapter One, by Osman Mohamed Osman Ali, provides an important background to the discourse on *shari’a*, which is a concept understood differently by various Islamic groups in Africa. According to Ali, *shari’a* is viewed by most Islamic groups in the Shendi region of Sudan as all encompassing and divine, inclusive of all human life. This is a popular view among African Muslims, although not all Muslims in Africa share this view. Groups like the Islamic Movement and Ansar al-Mahdi feel the need to apply *shari’a* and interpret the Islamic texts esoterically and exoterically to cope with modern times, while Ansar al-Sunna believes that *shari’a* is not only universal but permanent and therefore must be viewed from the understanding of *al-Salaf al-Salih* (Prophet’s companions and their successors) without

re-fashioning. The reality of life sometimes supersedes the discourse on *shari'a* in Africa. This is featured in Salma Mohamed's contribution of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Mandela and Wad Al-Bashir camps where the debate on *shari'a* is of less relevance; what matters most is a common concern about life.

Since 1999, twelve states in northern Nigeria have established *shari'a*, with Zamfara leading the way. An initiative that was started by politicians quickly got the support of many Islamic groups such as *Izala*, *Tajdidil Islam*, Sufis, etc. Ramzi Ben Amara makes a remarkable contribution by asking an important question "who (among the Islamic groups) is the real initiator of *shari'a* after Ahmad Sani Yeriman Bakura?" *Izala* started as a movement for the "purification" of Islam from *bid'a* (innovation), which includes Sufi practices of *mawlid* (celebrating the Prophet's birthday), *salat al-fatih* (special prayer), *dhikr* (congregational remembering), etc. The *Izala* consider these practices as innovations and *shirk* (polytheism), which brought conflict with the Sufis from the 1970s through 1990s. *Izala* seems to have relented in its effort to fight the Sufis. Therefore, the implementation of *shari'a*, which the group claimed to have initiated, provided a good platform to strategize and remain relevant. Ben Amara observes that "the *Izala* adapted several times to the political conditions in Nigeria."

Abdul-Fatah Makinde draws attention to the evolution of the Independent *Shari'a* Panel in Osun State (southwest Nigeria). Because of the mixture of Muslims, Christians, and practitioners of African religion in southwestern Nigeria, Muslims in Osun State only agitated for the establishment of *shari'a* courts to handle personal issues such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Despite opposition, the Independent *Shari'a* Panel (ISP) was created to deal with Muslim cases and to settle family disputes.

Education is as important in Islam as it is in other religions. Therefore, Chikas Danfulani studies Muslim women's education in northern Nigeria under the *shari'a*. The author argues that despite Islam's emphasis on education, Muslim women continue to lag behind in northern Nigeria compared to their male counterparts, as they are often seen as mothers and homemakers.

The discourse among Muslim minorities in Africa constantly featured in the Kadhi's court, especially in places like Kenya and Tanzania, which forms two separate sections in this book. Halkano Abdi Wario examines the situation in Isiolo where Muslims make an effort to establish a Kadhi's court, which challenged relations between Muslims and Christians. This has initiated debates on religious involvement in the Kenyan constitution, intertwined with issues of ethnicity, politics, and the socio-geographic aspects of the region. Christians in Kenya often view the Muslim effort for inclusion of a Kadhi's court in the constitution with mix feelings.

In the town of Kendu Bay, Muslim women are not adequately benefiting from the court for lack of sufficient knowledge of Islam, especially in regard to marriage and family life according to Rebecca Osiro. Many marriages were contracted without proper *mahr* (dowry), and marriage of two sisters by one man is often common. Widows are often mandated to marry their late husband's brother. The complication surrounding the mixture of culture and religion necessitated the establishment of a Kadhi's court in this area to regulate religious issues. The difficulty of the Kadhi's court is in situating these issues within Islam, especially since most of the marriages are already *fasid* (invalid) in Islam.

Tanzania represents another case where the demand for the re-introduction of the Kadhi's court is high. The Muslims seem uncomfortable with the Magistrate court handling their cases of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Therefore, they not only request the government to establish a Kadhi's court but also to fund its operation. Christians challenged this effort as a gradual effort to implement *shari'a* in Tanzania.

An interesting chapter was contributed by Esha Faki Mwinyihaji on the Swahili Muslim women's adoption of the concept of "necessity removes restrictions" (*al-dharurat tubih al-mahzurat*) to facilitate their participation in Kenyan public space. Usually, religion and cultural restrictions confine Swahili Muslim women to their homes away from the political space, but today the economic, political, and social challenges have forced them to participate in the public sphere in Mombasa alongside men. Muslim women who participate in politics face criticism from Muslim men/Islamic scholars who see their appearance as a source of *fitna* (civil strife) since some of them appear without a veil.

The religious demography of Kondo in Tanzania is redefined by the proliferation of religious groups and movements. The debate on *shari'a* continues to attract discourse between Muslims and Christians at macro-national and micro-local levels according to Bernardin Mfumbusa, which is centered on the re-introduction of the Kadhi's court.

Dauda Abubakar, *University of Jos, Nigeria*

Scott Fitzsimmons. 2013. *Mercenaries in Asymmetric Conflicts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 340 pp.

In a case of art imitating life, the film *The Wild Geese* (1978) generated an image of mercenaries in popular culture as tactically savvy armed operatives who provide their military prowess at a price to despotic African leaders seeking to radically change local politics. Not straying too far from reality, the film highlights the fact that post-independence Africa witnessed a major increase in the use of mercenaries in African conflicts, as regimes often hired mercenaries to defend their governments from challengers and to compensate for the deficiencies of their own state armies. In both film and in reality, mercenaries often achieved victory with smaller numbers against larger opponents.

In *Mercenaries in Asymmetric Conflicts*, Scott Fitzsimmons takes this observation and sets out to determine exactly why mercenaries achieve battlefield success in the face of opponents who are often larger and better equipped. To explain this paradox, he proposes that the military culture embedded within a given armed group directly influences its military effectiveness, and thus its battlefield performance against an opponent. Fitzsimmons theorizes that, despite a disparity in material capabilities, a materially inferior force, which strongly emphasizes certain behavioral norms, will be able to defeat an opponent that does not emphasize those same norms.

The bulk of the book surveys four African conflicts (in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo) involving mercenary groups and analyzes each through two competing theories in a sound methodological approach. In his analysis, Fitzsimmons pits each case against both his normative theory of military effectiveness and a competing neorealist theory to determine

which approach best explains the cases. Fitzsimmons' normative theory claims that the key to the battlefield success of mercenary groups is their maintenance of an internal military culture, which encourages creative thinking, decentralized decision-making, technical proficiency, and group cohesiveness. In contrast, the neorealist theory is based on the traditional indicators of military effectiveness—the number of troops, combined with the quality and quantity of its weapons system, and claims that battlefield success is due to material factors. In his comparative analysis of each case, Fitzsimmons demonstrates clearly that the normative theory provides the greatest amount of explanatory value in explaining the outcomes of each of the four conflicts.

The book offers a remarkable contribution to the field of conflict studies for two distinct reasons. First, it introduces a constructivist approach to explain the outcome of military engagements between asymmetric opponents in a field of study dominated by neo-realist explanations. Second, while virtually all research into conflict outcomes involves cases of state-based armed forces and non-state armed groups, Fitzsimmons adds to the literature by expanding the study of conflict outcomes to incorporate cases of private military groups to the category of non-state armed groups. Nevertheless, the work could be improved by providing greater background to each of the cases. After a scant overview of a case, the book delves into a lengthy comparison between the predictions of the two theories in each case. While this technique demonstrates the explanatory value of the author's theory, it cuts into the readability of the case studies. As a result, each case's narrative is chopped up into brief examples supporting a theory's predictions without providing enough information about each case. Unless readers are intimately familiar with each of the cases, they are left to utilize the extensive footnotes in order to develop their own understanding of each case prior to evaluating the utility of Fitzsimmons' theory.

Despite these drawbacks, the book's concepts are applicable to a number of audiences. For students of African conflicts, the case studies provide a great deal of insight into the factors involved in the outcomes of conflicts involving mercenaries in post-independence Africa. For academic researchers involved in conflict studies, the proposed constructivist approach is an invaluable tool to help explain the importance of military culture on conflict outcome. For those involved in policy formulation, the book's theoretical and empirical contributions point out that military effectiveness can be based as much on a military's culture as material factors—a notion that policymakers would be wise to as they evaluate options to provide arms and other material resources to state and non-state armed groups in the hopes of a cheap military victory. Finally, for all readers, the book enhances the understanding of mercenaries beyond the shallow characters of a Hollywood film.

Sean McClure, *US Army*

Jörg Gertel, Richard Rottenburg and Sandra Calkins, eds. 2014. *Disrupting Territories: Land, Commodification & Conflict in Sudan*. Suffolk: James Currey. 255 pp.

Sudan is very familiar with recurrent and violent outbreaks of conflicts over land. Broadly, explanations have read conflicts as “ethnic” or “tribal” territorial disputes driven by various

factors, including environmental constraints (e.g., drought) and/or changing land use patterns (e.g., expansion of mechanized agriculture).

This book offers a rich and valuable contribution to our understandings of land-based conflicts in Sudan. It casts these conflicts as symptomatic of global processes and mechanisms of land commodification—the process of transforming collective land into private property—that serve to “separate land from its social references” and thereby “disrupting territories.” The book approaches “disruption” in Sudanese territories from two angles. First, it examines how global forces of land commodification are filtered through the Sudanese state, and how they transform rural peoples land rights (Chapters 2, 3, and 4). Second, it looks at rural peoples experiences of struggles over land (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Siddig Umbadda (Chapter 2) investigates “Agricultural Investment through Land-Grabbing in Sudan.” He outlines the historical context of land appropriation by the British colonial administration and subsequent post-independence governments. Both eras of appropriation employed legal instruments to transform communal owned and used land into private government property that can then be redirected to other objectives, namely “agricultural development.” Tracking the history and extent of land dispossession for the expansion of irrigated and mechanized agriculture, he focuses on the current government’s strategy of granting long-term leases over large swathes of communally owned land to foreign investors. The impact of these dispossessions for rural populations, of which the most vulnerable are the nomadic pastoralists, is an alienation from their land and livelihood base. Assessing the performance of foreign agricultural investments schemes and various risks and opportunities associated, he concludes that the poor success and high risks that are currently experienced are a result of a lack in “good governance.” The low implementation rate of the agricultural investment schemes indicates that the government is “pursuing extractive rather than developmental policies” (p. 31).

In “Territories of Gold Mining: International Investment and Artisanal Extraction in Sudan” (Chapter 3), Sandra Calkins and Enrico Ille reveal similar dimensions of government-sponsored land dispossession for foreign private investors. In this case, legal instruments are geared towards contracting communal land to foreign private mining enterprises. Since gold mining is a burgeoning industry in Sudan, small artisanal miners have taken up to the activity, often in the same territories that are contracted to foreigners. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Eastern Sudan the authors illustrate how practices of artisanal gold miners in negotiating access to territory and infringement on private property creates tensions between these groups and the foreign companies. However, while the government legally biases these foreign companies, Calkins and Ille argue that they do not intervene to enforce these legally contracted rights and do not prohibit illegal artisanal mining activities. They argue that the government is primarily interested pursuing “extractive policies” of generating revenues through contracting land rights to foreign investors—or acting as a “passage point between global capital and natural resources” (p. 68) and is less interested effective control and administration of a territory.

Musa Adam Adul-Jalil’s “Nomad-Sedentary Relations in the Context of Dynamic Land Rights in Darfur: From Complementarity to Conflict” (Chapter 5) challenges conventional depictions of the conflict in Darfur as being between “Arab” pastoral nomads and “African”

sedentary farmers. Instead, he outlines how the relationships between these groups have widely known to be complementary under the governance of customary tenure systems. Historically, accesses to land rights were governed by tribal *dar* institutions, which conferred upon its members the right to use and exploit resources, and upon visiting non-member tribes temporary grazing and water rights. Legal tenure reforms of post-independence governments set the scene for the appropriated communal land (for commercialized agriculture) and denied the legitimacy of the customary institutions on which the complementary nomad-sedentary relations were based. It further transformed the way in which “newcomers” gain access to land by removing the tribal ethnic affiliation to land claims and replacing them with claims on the basis of “citizenship.” Adul-Jalil argues that these and various other identified factors—including severe and recurrent droughts, growing competition for land, and protracted cross-border conflicts—have transformed traditional complementary relations into contemporary conflicting interactions.

All the contributions offer rich empirical and theoretical insights into understanding the complex and volatile dynamics of land-related contestations in Sudan. The strong theoretical harmony between the chapters makes the value of the book a strong and illuminating collection of pieces.

Azza Dirar, *University of East Anglia*

Georgina Holmes. 2014. *Women and War in Rwanda: Gender, Media and the Representation of Genocide*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. 323 pp.

In this study of media representations of women during violent conflict, Georgina Holmes uses Rwanda and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo, hereafter) as case studies for understanding the complex interactions between mediatized political discourse, local actors who perform in these media, and international relations. Her discussion focuses on representations produced by the media of the Global North about women in conflict zones in the Global South. Holmes writes against the “tendency to fit Rwandan and Congolese women into a framework of victimology which presents African women as silent, passive and lacking agency” (p. 3). Her overarching argument is that women appearing in British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news documentaries about Rwanda and Congo participate in the “gendered international politics of revisionism” (p. 5) through which actors attempt to influence media narratives for political gain. Within this framework, Holmes makes several competing claims about African women’s agency, media representations of gender and conflict, and mass rape in conflict as “constituting genocide by attrition” (p.4).

Holmes’s study consists primarily of discourse analysis of news documentaries and features produced primarily by the BBC and of war propaganda produced by various parties to the conflicts in Rwanda and the Congo. She drew these sources from archives in Kigali, Rwanda, at the Coventry University Media Library, and at the British Film Institute (BFI) as well as from the private collection of Linda Melvern and the author’s own collection assembled over eight years. She divides up these archival sources by time period and conflict to conduct separate discourse analyses on (1) extremist Hutu propaganda in the years leading up to the 1994 genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda; (2) the ways in which the BBC’s weekday news analysis

program, *Newsnight*, framed the civil war and genocide in Rwanda; (3) the “BBC’s institutional narrative” (p. 174), as Holmes calls it, about Rwanda after the 1994 genocide as presented in *Newsnight*, in *Panorama* a current affairs documentary program, and on the BBC website; and (4) media portrayals of mass rape in eastern Congo as portrayed in UK and USA media and in war propaganda in Congo and Rwanda. The discourse analysis is supplemented by interviews by the author with thirty-four people including editors, producers, journalists, and filmmakers from Rwanda, Britain and Canada; members of the Rwandan government; representatives of human rights organizations and NGOs; and Rwandan and Congolese women’s rights activists.

Holmes’s intent is to challenge dominant narratives about gender and war circulating not only in international media but also in feminist theorizations of international relations. Holmes asserts that examining women in conflict via discourse analysis of “mediatized political discourse” can lead to “closed readings of women, leaving little space to assess how political actors perform, interact with journalists or attempt to influence media narratives” (pp. 9-10). To overcome this methodological challenge, Holmes adopts Norman Fairclough’s (1998) approach and combines text analysis of written and spoken texts with examination of media production, dissemination and consumption, and the social practices that frame mediatized political discourse (p. 10).

When read as a set of case studies of gender, media representations, and violent conflict, this book is highly compelling. Holmes deftly analyzes how media of the Global North represent African women in ways that depict them as helpless victims without any agency. Her examination of the BBC’s various news programs representation of the conflicts in the African Great Lakes and genocide in Rwanda is well grounded in primary sources and clearly connected to relevant international relations literature. Her examination of Hutu extremist media representations of women in the years leading up to the 1994 genocide is less compelling. While non-area specialists will find her analysis enlightening, scholars specializing in Rwanda will find the analysis limited since Holmes does not tie it to the scholarship on gender and conflict in Rwanda that has emerged since 2006. Another limitation of the study is that Holmes does not provide quantitative analysis of these media representations of African women even though she notes in her introduction that quantitative analysis can help “map distortion within mediatized political discourse” (p. 9).

Scholars of gender and media, conflict in Africa, and feminist international relations will find this book stimulating and informative. Scholars specializing in the African Great Lakes region may also find the book helpful as a reliable source of information about international and regional media reporting on or operating in Rwanda and eastern Congo between 1990 and 2007.

Jennie E. Burnet, *University of Louisville*

David Uru Iyam. 2013. *Matriarchy and Power in Africa*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan. 196 pp.

Women’s empowerment in Africa has been a central theme in academic and development discourse in the past two decades. In *Matriarchy and Power in Africa*, Iyam argues that this discourse has served to perpetuate a “myth” of the submissive woman in Africa. This myth has

ultimately shaped the way many scholars understand women and power in Africa. This is not to argue that women do not experience disempowering life circumstances in Africa. Instead, Iyam argues that focus has become attuned to women's disempowerment at the expense of acknowledging the ways in which women attain and define empowerment in their own terms and in their own contexts.

Iyam introduces an ethnography of his childhood in Nigeria in his book. In the process, he documents the life of his grandmother, a woman who embodies strength, leadership, and status within the village of Egbisim. Instead of defining empowerment in clear conceptual terms, however, Iyam shows the reader what women's empowerment means in the context of his village community through the story of his grandmother. Iyam does this in a manner that is sensitive not only to those tangible indicators of empowerment often highlighted by scholars (i.e., wealth and education) but also the intangible or symbolic indicators of empowerment (i.e., social status and respect). Iyam artfully demonstrates this conceptualization of empowerment through narrative in distinct ways, which will be discussed in this review.

Aneji Eko, or *Mma Jenny* as she is introduced to the reader in the opening chapters, holds a place of social significance in her village community. This is expressed first and foremost in how she is addressed; the use of her English name suggests that she is a "social equal" to the "important people" within the community. Those who addressed her with this name were also prestigious members of the community. Language, then, serves as an important component to empowerment in this community, as the way she is greeted and the names by which she is called can demonstrate her level of importance in the village. The use of language as a symbol of empowerment is also demonstrated through Aneji Eko's dedication in learning to write her name and by the performance that ensued each time she was presented with a form requiring her signature. This projection of "literacy" is important to her status in the community.

In many ways, Aneji Eko's empowerment is also rooted in her economic position within the community. Iyam's grandmother demonstrates her power as a businesswoman who holds a position of authority among other community members. This is clearly evident in Aneji Eko's ability to mediate conflict within the village, particularly as she oversees the delivery of services within the community—from toilet cleaning services to the maintenance of home roofs. It is this position that allows her to challenge other women of authority within a local woman's group. Additionally, her level of wealth allows her to send her grandchild to a private boarding school that will improve his educational opportunities and further secure her family's (as well as her own) position of power within the community. This theme resonates throughout the book; the educational success of the grandson is emphasized a way of improving the grandmother's own status in the community.

Through Iyam's vignettes, the theme of "matriarchy" is closely entwined in a more general notion of power within the village. Iyam demonstrates Aneji's position of matriarch in several significant ways. First, she exerts her authority over her children by taking her grandchildren from them and raising these grandchildren in her home. She feels her children are inadequate parents and compares them throughout the book to animals, inferior to her own status and the status she hopes her grandchildren will attain. Secondly, this matriarchal authority is expressed through her fierce discipline of her own grandchildren, particularly with regards to their education. This disciplinary role is extended outside the home as she is seen regulating

behavior throughout the community as well. From the punishment of her tenants within the village to her very public admonition of the Nigerian military forces during the Biafran War, Aneji negotiates power in both private and public spheres of society by drawing from the matriarchal authority she has established. As such, she is looked upon as a figure of authority within the community, which is seldom challenged.

Iyam's ethnography never once mentions the concept "power" in his account of life in Egbilism and the greater Agwagune area of Nigeria. If one is looking for a theoretical text with deep conceptual analysis on women's empowerment in Africa, *Matriarchy and Power in Africa* will not serve that purpose. However, through his stories, Iyam carefully illuminates those spaces of power his grandmother occupies. If one is looking for insights into the more subtle expressions of women's power in everyday life, Iyam provides a guide as to where one might look. As such, *Matriarchy and Power in Africa* is a timely and important resource for those scholars seeking to understand the complexities of gender and power in Africa.

Chesney McOmber, *University of Florida*

Christopher LaMonica and J. Shola Omotola, eds. 2014. *Horror in Paradise: Frameworks for Understanding the Crisis of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press. 303 pp.

This edited volume by Christopher LaMonica, associate professor at the US Coast Guard Academy, and J. Shola Omotola, PhD candidate at the University of Ibadan, is part of the Carolina Academic Press African World Series edited by Toyin Falola. *Horror in Paradise*, aptly named for its subject matter, takes a multidisciplinary approach to studying the devastating environmental, social and political issues of the Niger Delta. By combining seventeen different contributors and eighteen chapters into four thematic sections, *Horror in Paradise* serves as an excellent survey text. While there is little to no discussion of research methodology, the book can still be a useful contribution to an undergraduate level introductory course on Nigeria.

The editors' preface, which lays out the theoretical problematic that motivates the book, engages primarily with Michel Foucault's idea that "truth or knowledge is merely an expression of socio-cultural configurations of power" (p. xvii). LaMonica and Omotola aim to avoid what they call "intellectual snobbism" (p. xvi). Instead they seek to address the "material facts on the ground" (p. xvi) by incorporating the writings of African scholars and policy practitioners rather than focusing only on the acclaimed or "expert" scholarship, which is overwhelmingly produced in the West. As the editors explain, these local scholars are "Well-informed...often 'raw' or not polished in terms of scholarship, and therefore marginalized..." within the academy (p. xvi). They encourage the reader not to "...superficially react" (p. xvii) to the numerous typographical and grammatical errors in the book, as they are certainly no reason to dismiss or devalue the arguments presented by the various authors.

The first section, on culture, gender and the environment, primes the reader to bear these social issues in mind when approaching the subsequent sections. The editors state, and contributors reiterate, that the book intends to "fill the gap" in the scholarship created when social and environmental factors are not included in discussions of sustainable development,

security, and governance. Taken as a whole, the book asserts that consideration of security, governance, and development without also considering social and environmental factors, is not practically or academically productive. In the first chapter of this section, S.O. Aghalino focuses on the ways in which the political economy of oil and ecological repercussions of oil pollution deeply affect culture and disproportionately impact women. In so doing he successfully interweaves the environmental, the political and the social.

The second section of the book on governance begins with a chapter on resource distribution to minority communities, an issue of particular importance for the marginalized peoples of the Delta region. The first chapter by Ekande Olumide discusses the derivation principle, or the way in which the central government distributes resources to localities. It is critical to this section that Olumide's chapter comes first, for without this understanding of the derivation principle, the following chapter by Mourtada Deme and Bodunrin Adebo, about improving the legitimacy of presidential elections, does not clearly connect to the rest of the book.

Section three, on development, is a prime example of the editors' endeavor to integrate scholarship and the work of development. LaMonica engages with the "classic" works of capitalist and democratic theory such as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Emmanuel Kant and James Madison to name a few in order to substantiate his argument advocating the importance of considering international factors rather than only considering domestic issues when analyzing the "curse" brought by oil in Nigeria. He argues that to only address the problems within the Nigerian state is, to some extent, "blaming the victim" (p. 143); corrupt state officials certainly exist but they operate in collusion with multinational oil companies, and both must be addressed.

The final section, "Security and the Amnesty Programme," is preceded by eight pages of photos from Amnesty International documenting the damage from a 2008 oil spill into Bodo Creek in Bodo, Nigeria. The images show the destruction of an ecosystem that once provided food and employment for many communities who have since been displaced. These photos help the reader understand what has generated so much violence in the region and why amnesty and disarmament programs are so significant in contemporary Nigerian politics. However, because the book as a whole is aimed at the novice student of Nigerian politics, this imagery should have been placed much earlier in the book.

Although *Horror in Paradise* is not an academically rigorous text, it serves as an excellent resource to those interested in studying Nigeria. While much of the Political Science literature on the region focuses on economic factors, the editors have offered a valuable contribution to the extant scholarship by presenting a multitude of angles from which to understand the ongoing conflicts of the Niger Delta.

Adria Tinnin, *University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)*

A. Carl LeVan. 2015. *Dictators and Democracy in African Development: The Political Economy of Good Governance in Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 282 pp.

Dictators and Democracy in African Development: The Political Economy of Good Governance in Nigeria, is a book of five chapters excluding para-textual appendages. Chapter One focuses on "A Theory of Institutions, Preferences and Performance." "Veto Players in Nigeria's Political History since Independence" is the preoccupation of Chapter Two, while Chapter Three is on "The Impact of Nigeria's Veto Players on Local and National Collective Goods." Chapter Four is on "Analytical Equivalents in Ghana and Zimbabwe," and Chapter Five is based on "Madison's Model Unbound" dialectics.

A. Carl LeVan has been studying governmental performance in providing public goods in Africa – particularly in Nigeria – for a long time. A professor of political science at American University, he is well-known for his thought-provoking, dogged, and brilliant diagnoses of Nigeria's postcolonial condition, which has materialized in a corpus of publications. *Dictators and Democracy in African Development: The Political Economy of Good Governance in Nigeria* is a seminal text with both qualitative and quantitative evidence that, as the publisher states, calibrates "policy processes, public performance, and Nigeria's inability, thus far, to reach its full potential in democracy, development, and provision of public goods."

Dictators and Democracy in African Development opens a new chapter to Chinua Achebe's apt phrase "the trouble with Nigeria" beyond the common factors such as "oil, colonialism, ethnic diversity, foreign debt, and dictatorship" (p. i). LeVan does this by explaining critically and rationally how the policy-making process explicates disparities in governmental performance better than other frequently mentioned factors indicated earlier. LeVan's proposition for this variation in explaining the trouble with Nigeria finds materiality in "veto player theory" as developed by George Tsebelis. The theory states that governmental malfunction or inept political leadership is broadly shaped and sustained by "individual or collective actors whose agreement is required for a change of the status quo" (Tsebelis 1995, p. 289). This political theorizing finds correspondence in Richard Joseph's concept called "prebendalism" in his *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic* (1987). Joseph espouses how paying back to political godfathers (European equivalent of feudal lords) limits leaders' ability to provide public goods in Nigeria and elsewhere on the continent of Africa as well as other developing nations of the world.

Another contribution of the book is LeVan's ability to compare notes with Ghana and Zimbabwe on how political history can be configured by these "informal institutions" (p. 37) – "veto players" – as opposed to formal institutions or structures that underwrite and shape governmental performance in a polity. Beyond this intimation, LeVan discusses how Nigeria's unfolding of the Madisonian model of political experimentation will not shield the country from the bangs and pangs of political brutality and leadership buccaneering, given the constraining powers of the nation's veto players (p. 235). In substantiating his hypothesis, LeVan draws from, among other sources, Chinweizu's poignant, sobering poetic invocation of postcolonial Nigerian condition as wrapped up in his "The Epidemic", whose prognosis of Nigeria adumbrates a staccato of " ... terror in terror ..."!

There is no gainsaying the fact that *Dictators and Democracy in African Development* is an ambitious and fresh intellectual ratiocination. The book will be an invaluable tool in the hands

of policymakers, leaders and students of international politics, among others. However, the book is a mélange of quasi-scientific and political science inquiry with somewhat disconcerting quantitative and qualitative explanations, which students/researchers who are not quick on the uptake might find a bit difficult to comprehend. Nevertheless, LeVan has added another interesting page to Nigeria's harlequin political debate.

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Uzoечи Nwagbara, *Greenwich School of Management*

Gregory Mann. 2015. *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 281 pp.

Gregory Mann's new book is an intriguing exploration of the reconfiguration of political boundaries and the development of NGOs in Mali from the late 1940s through the late 1970s. This study is extremely valuable for the growing number of scholars seeking to explore the impact of international NGOs in the first decades of African independence following colonialism. Rather than provide an overarching survey, individual chapters tackle different interactions between the French and Malian governments with a wide variety of nongovernmental entities and foreign states. The opening chapter offers a fascinating exploration of the career of Mamadou Madiera Keita, an anti-colonial activist who became a colleague and assistant to the prominent French anthropologist Georges Balandier. Keita's radicalism shaped Balandier's analysis during fieldwork in Guinea, and Balandier's research credentials led Keita in new directions as well. The leftist socialist regime in power in Mali from 1960 to 1968 employed sociology to produce and examine new understandings of society. The new moment produced by the creation of an independent Mali required the formation of citizens. This meant reordering the often loose legal and political categories of the colonial era, from women who earned the right to vote as mothers to the power of indigenous chiefs. Instead of allowing anomalies in the same way as the colonial state had, Malian state authorities created a new category of citizens. Of course, this fiction of universality still had room for exclusion, particularly for Toureg people and suspected enemies of the state. These exclusionary measures became even greater after Moussa Troaré seized power. Former top members of the regime underwent years of torture in Saharan prisons, and sometimes labored in salt mines as slaves had in earlier years.

Varied efforts enforce or erase government controls over migration are another important theme of *From Empires to NGOs*. The new Malian government faced a major challenge in seeking to impose Malian citizenship on the tens of thousands of Malians who had moved to

Sudan and gone on the pilgrimage to Mecca. French officials had only haphazardly tried to document these migrants, given the challenges they placed on colonial bureaucratic controls. Malian officials demanded firmer identification requirements, in large part out of accusations that northern Tuareg migrants were selling other Malians into slavery in Saudi Arabia. The sharp divide between Toureg and southern Malians, based in large part on slavery and indigenous conceptions of race had implications for the establishment of Mali, as it would later on during the Tuareg revolt of 2012 that led to interventions by Al-Qaeda and the French military. Malian immigrants in France posed another challenge of sovereignty. Although the experiences of West Africans in France in the 1960s has become well-mined territory, Mann tries with some success to examine new questions through the lens of political identities and the growing role of non-governmental organizations. Rather than considering these migrants as a problem for the French government, the author reserves expectations by noting how Malian officials struggled to claim control over these immigrants as citizens of their home country. African immigrants such as Sally N'Dongo formed and led NGOs that challenged French arrangements with African governments, as well as criticizing the empty promises of the Malian state in providing assistance to Malians in France.

For the growing number of scholars working on historicizing the growth of NGOs and international aid in the 1960s and 1970s, the most useful and innovative section explores international aid interventions during the Sahel droughts of the mid-1970s and their aftermath. Aid agencies such as CARE and the American Friends Service Committee had varied agendas in developing aid projects, from distributing US government food surplus to establishing schools and agricultural programs. CARE workers tried to sell rural schools and other programs to Malian authorities, thus supporting the spread of the government's reach in rural communities. Mann rightly notes how the drought crisis and aid interventions created a wider space between rural people and the state that would only increase with the decline of state budgets from the 1980s onward. Human rights organizations also entered the picture to criticize the Malian government's treatment of prisoners in ways that highlighted the supposedly apolitical nature of Western human rights. One wishes this last chapter could have been fleshed out more, particularly beyond the 1970s, but Mann's analysis furnishes a foundation for other researchers. As a whole, this book merits a wide audience among readers interested in decolonization, the formation of national identities, and development.

Jeremy Rich, *Marywood University*

Stuart A. Marks. 2014. *Discordant Village Voices: A Zambian Community-Based Wildlife Programme*. Braamfontein: University of South Africa Press. 325 pp.

Whereas community-based resource programmes are a technical prescription for conserving wildlife and habitats in rural areas, they are never innocuous, straightforward, apolitical or neutral exercises (pp. 202-03).

Stuart Marks—ecologist, anthropologist, development and conservation advisor—has accompanied the Valley Bisa for five decades in Zambia's Luangwa valley. He offers a unique long-term and intimate perspective on these people and how they relate—as individuals in

many cases, as lineages or associations or communities in others—with wildlife, governments, management systems, and projects. By considering processes of cultural change, governance, representativeness, participation, and benefit-sharing, he reveals the complexity of influences and effects that interact to generate often unexpected outcomes.

The author initially resided with the Bisa in 1966-1967, shortly after Zambian independence (1964), collecting data to build cultural and environmental baselines. A second long stay in 1988-1989 coincided with the inception of Zambia's national community-based wildlife management program. He undertook shorter visits each decade, through 2011, in order to monitor developments and changes over time; before, during and after the community-based wildlife management scheme. Together with local field assistants, he has applied a wide range of methodologies: active participant observation, passive participation in meetings, interviews, household surveys, censuses, daily activity recalls, timed activity records, informant diaries, questionnaires, land use assessments, wildlife counts, and reviews of local materials and national archives.

Historically, Bisa livelihoods depended on subsistence hunting, subsistence farming, migrant labor, and have been strongly influenced by national conservation policy. Marks argues that local people have experienced a remarkable, and by no means positive, continuity of government imposition beginning with colonial Northern Rhodesia (British South Africa Company in the 1890s, British Protectorate 1924-1963) and continuing under post-colonial Zambia. The Nabwalya settlements lie between North and South Luangwa National Parks (created in the 1940s). Outside the protected areas, large spaces, which after independence were named Game Management Areas, were declared in 1950 as first class safari hunting concessions for private operators, or second class hunting areas reserved for "native" residents. Authorities thereby assumed the rights to land and wildlife, and consistently viewed local people principally as poachers responsible for game extermination through overhunting, population growth, and conversion of habitat to farms and settlements.

Centralized control has continued, often imposed through violence, despite the loud rhetoric of community-based conservation since the 1980s. Benefits accrue mainly to elites and governments and the private sector. Local people bear the brunt of the costs, especially damage to crops and human lives (at least 112 deaths and 138 injuries from wild animals 1990-2007, not including snakebite), but have lost historic or traditional rights to resources including game and land. By assuming legal rights to the most visible resource, wildlife, the state has significantly narrowed livelihood and welfare options for residents, in a region where the tsetse fly precludes livestock raising and where conditions for crop production are poor.

The cumbersome Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas (ADMADE) project operated from 1988-1997 with support from USAID (United States Agency for International Development), WWF (World Wildlife Fund), and WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society). Large German- and Norwegian-funded Conservation or Integrated Rural Development projects were implemented at the same time in the Luangwa valley. Marks finds little evidence for the projects' claims to combine conservation and development based on tourism revenues to improve and protect human welfare and restore wildlife through sustainable resource development. Instead, new institutions such as the Community Resources Board are appropriated by local elites to strengthen their own authority in collusion with

outside interests. Local hunters can purchase licenses, but few do because of the small number available, their high cost, and the great travel distance to the sales point.

Is the view then entirely pessimistic? No. Under every set of conditions at least some of the local people have managed to adapt, assimilate, and benefit. Protected areas, private safari operators, and conservation and development projects have employed local people, built schools and clinics, installed grinding mills and wells, and provided relief food supplies during droughts or floods. Yet more remarkable and intriguing is how Chief Nabwalya and his allies constructed a resource regime, a lineage husbandry system that lasted for fifty years, from the 1930s to his death in 1984. A veritable amalgam of local and foreign ideas and activities, this regime provided bushmeat as well as protection for his subjects and their properties, successfully contending with expanding human and wildlife populations. Should this not be the model for community-based wildlife management, in the Luangwa valley and beyond?

Andrew Noss, *University of Florida*

Marc Matera, Misty L. Bastian and Susan Kingsley Kent. 2013. *The Women's War of 1929: Gender and Violence in Colonial Nigeria*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. 292 pp.

It is not difficult to understand why the *Ogu Umunwaanyi*, or Women's War, of 1929 has attracted a great deal of scholarly interest over the years. A large-scale mobilization on the part of Igbo women against the British colonial regime in southeastern Nigeria, the *Ogu* neatly encapsulates some of the more feverishly explored topics in the field African studies. As an important moment in the history of Africa's most populous nation, it provides contemporary historians with a dramatic and obvious entry point to the study of African agency (of the preferred, subaltern kind), colonial negotiation, and gender.

Now, Marc Matera, Misty L. Bastian, and Susan Kingsley Kent have provided us with a new study of the *Ogu*, reconstructing events leading up to the women's protests and chronicling in substantial detail the violence that ensued. The authors are primarily interested in the ways in which the culturally specific conceptions of gender held by both Igbo women and British colonial administrators respectively informed the colonial encounter and, ultimately, led to the bloodshed of 1929. This comparative treatment of the *Ogu*, they claim, bridges a major gap in the literature between Africanist historiography, which features the Women's War prominently, and that of British colonialism, which has largely ignored the event.

The Women's War of 1929 argues that the *Ogu* cannot be fully understood without considering the cultural context of social and economic destabilization that came about as a result of indirect colonial rule in Nigeria. The system of warrant chiefs, implemented by British colonial administrators to facilitate governance in the politically decentralized lands of Nigeria's southeast, proved a particularly consequential catalyst for stoking discontent. The authors describe the pre-colonial Igbo worldview as being defined by a gender binary — with co-dependent masculine and feminine hemispheres coming together to form a mutually-reinforced whole. Contrasting the "enclosed, surveilled, and controlled compound" of the masculine sphere with the "open, free-wheeling, transparent, and feminine" marketplace of southeast Nigeria [43], the authors argue that the women protestors of 1929 were motivated by a sense of

alienation created when the traditional balance between the masculine and feminine in Igbo political and social life was upset.

On the other hand, they posit that the confused and violent response by British colonial authorities to the all-female demonstrators reflected the gendered assumptions that girded imperialist ideology. Here, the psychological analysis of British colonial officials and their attitudes toward African women is particularly interesting. Matera, Mastian, and Kent argue that the British administrators attempted to demystify the anxiety-inducing otherness of their colonial subjects by adopting measures to control the sexuality of Nigerian women through dress codes and an emphasis on Christian morality. Much is made of the female protestors' nudity and the effect that disrobing may have had on the colonial security forces who ultimately responded with stunning violence.

After laying out its critical framework in the first few chapters, *The Women's War of 1929* moves swiftly into a detailed account of the unrest that shook southeast Nigeria in the 1920s. Most of the reconstruction presented here is based on a careful reading of colonial records, although the authors consult newspapers as well. Finally, the book assesses the aftermath of the *Ogu*, including the reforms in colonial government that came about as a result.

Like other contributions to the new wave of African colonial historiography, *The Women's War of 1929* is interested primarily in the process of negotiation between African actors and the colonial regime. In this respect, it is entirely successful. The authors effectively show that colonial authorities were reactive and off-balance in their response to the *Ogu Umunwaanyi*, which challenged and confounded their assumptions about gender and moral economy in southeast Nigeria. Indeed, the women's protests and the ensuing bloodshed resulted in a dramatic rethinking of administrative policy in colonial Nigeria, including the demise of the warrant chief system.

The Women's War of 1929 is primarily a colonial history, interested above all in the ideology, motivations, and transformations within the British administration. This is not a shortcoming; the book is quite successful in its endeavor to draw causal links between the gendered aspects of Igbo cosmology that inspired the *Ogu* and British colonial practice. However, its area of greatest analytical strength—the psychology and motivation of British colonial actors in their response to the protests—makes it a study best suited to courses and reading lists focused on colonial rule. It should be of great interest to scholars and students of both Nigerian and comparative colonial history.

Andrew G. Barsom, *Michigan State University*

Patricia A. Romero. 2015. *African Women: A Historical Panorama*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers. 359 pp.

The intended and explicit purpose of this book is to “personalize some of the leading women who have made contributions to African history”, while making it “accessible to general readers”. And it does just that, in clear language and with little rhetoric. The 359 pages are divided into nine chapters that cover the whole territory of Africa and most of the scope of its history, starting from pre-colonial Africa up to the present. This approach is an indication that this book is still not for everyone since, however, given the extensive nature of the subject

covered, some of its assertions are rather general and lacking in support. Nevertheless, it does serve as an excellent starting point for deciding on a topic or as an introduction to any of the women and the topics it deals with. In addition to covering the whole African territory, the book is in basically chronological order and it gives specific examples from various countries.

The first chapter, covering the entire African continent in pre-colonial times, is a reminder of its past queens and heroines, from Queen Amina (of Nigeria) or Sheba (of Ethiopia) to Nzinga (of Angola). Chapters Two to Six focus on colonial times, also based on a chronological timeline and with various focal points. Chapter Two deals with the abuse of the body of women in South Africa; Chapter Three studies the complicated relationship between women and slavery (women were enslaved all throughout Africa, but some were also enslavers); and Chapter Four talks about the different changes brought about by life transitions to being with missionaries. Chapter Five goes back to South Africa and to the defiled woman's body, illustrated in the case of Sara Baartman (known as "the Hottentot Venus"); and Chapter Six once again encompasses the whole Africa to study the relationship between women and colonialism, including the treatment of diseases, female genital mutilation and legal issues of women, etc.

Chapter Seven advances in time to the late colonial era and centers on the participation of women in anti-colonial struggles, from the women's war in Nigeria to Mau-Mau in Kenya or the fight in the Portuguese colonies and in Southern Africa. Chapter Eight reaches the post-colonial era, with the issues that were important at the time: the Biafran war and other internal conflicts (such as Congo or Rwanda), the scourge of AIDS in Africa, and the evolution of female genital mutilation as an issue. The closing chapter, Chapter Nine, ends the main text of the book with the current situation of women in art and fashion, literature, law, migration, sports, and Nobel Prizes, painting a positive image full of role models.

The book is intended, as stated, for the general public; notwithstanding, it has a healthy collection of notes, an interesting list of references, and an index that closes the volume, all of which will be quite useful to anybody who wants to study the different aspects and historical figures covered in the book. A couple of negative points in the book: in spite of the importance the text attributes to names, and of the fact that one of the main aims of the book is to put names (and persons) in History, so that specific women may be remembered and their importance recognized, I found it shocking that some of them, even ones that could be easily checked were misspelled; for example: Uganda's president, Mr. Museveni, becomes "Musevina." The other issue with the book derives from the amplitude of its scope: given that it covers the whole of Africa during the whole of prehistory and most of history, while maintaining its brevity, the book can not but provoke questions that are left unanswered, while it does not provide substantiation for some of its statements, thus provoking questions that are left unanswered.

In summary, this is an easy-to read-book that may well serve as an introduction to the study of Africa and of African women, full of anecdotal evidence and some detail. It most certainly should spark the interest of the general reader to dwell deeper on the topic at hand.

Mar Rodríguez, *University of Oviedo (Spain) and Cuttington University (Liberia)*

Shobana Shankar. 2014. *Who Shall Enter Paradise? Christian Origins in Muslim Northern Nigeria, ca. 1890-1975*. Athens: Ohio University Press. 209 pp.

Since the 1970s, religion has been a source of intense conflict in Northern Nigeria. As a result, its religious history has been, and remains, fraught terrain—too often rewritten and reimagined to support various political agendas, most recently by Boko Haram. In her new book, Shobana Shankar, assistant professor of history at Stony Brook University, complicates these politically motivated historical narratives of Christian-Muslim interactions by investigating the relationships between Hausa-speaking Christians and their Muslim neighbors. Shankar contends that colonial Northern Nigeria was “a place of religious collaboration, experimentation, puzzlement, and sympathy” (p. 144). Her conclusions are based on archival research in Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States, and on new evidence, including handwritten diaries from the 1930s, around one hundred interviews with Christians and Muslims, and the unpublished memoir of Ethel Miller, the first white woman to work for the Church Missionary Society in Northern Nigeria.

Her monograph is divided into two parts and six chronological chapters. Part One, “The Word Travels,” shows how the spread of Christianity was unequivocally linked to literacy in *boko*, which Shankar defines as Roman script and sometimes Western academic subjects more generally, and the attempts both to gain and to control access to it (pp. xiv-xv). Marginalized peoples who were disconnected from their pasts, such as slaves, refugees, and migrant families, created opportunities for social, economic, and political mobility by casting off their previous identities, and crafting new religious identities for themselves as “stranger-migrants” (p. xxvii). The socially estranged, however, were not the only ones who were drawn to the missions. In Kano City, for instance, Muslims, along with the displaced, also frequented the missions and their bookshops to acquire reading materials, literacy, technical skills, and the prestige that accompanied these things—a process Shankar calls “the commercialization of Christian identity” (p. 46). These “crypto-Christians” would then use their new skills and fluid religious identities to find advancement in their professional life, straddling the line between the colonial and native governments (p. xxvii).

Part Two, “Followers of the Word,” inquires into the development of medical work among lepers and an associated informal education in Northern Nigeria after 1930, showing how Muslim authorities collaborated with missions to keep an eye on them and to control their activities, and also how these plans sometimes went awry. Although sequestering lepers was meant to contain and control Christian missions and to consolidate religious power, an unintended consequence ensued. Because leprosariums provided access to informal education and job opportunities on top of medical work, they instead promoted grassroots evangelism. This produced a large group of “Muslim Christians,” Muslims who participated in mission culture without any loss of social status, capable of exercising religious authority (p. 92). At the end of her book, Shankar demonstrates how Christians in Northern Nigeria effectively became invisible outsiders in political debates in the late colonial period and the era of independence, because they lacked a cohesive political identity. Northern Nigerian Christians were, in essence, culturally northern but religiously southern.

Shankar’s monograph reads more like a series of essays about differing episodes in the formation of Christianity in Northern Nigeria, linked only by chronology, rather than a

cohesive narrative. Most chapters share overlapping themes, except Chapter Three, which investigates Ethel Miller's anti-Muslim campaign and activism on behalf of Muslim women. This chapter seems a bit out of place considering that Shankar focuses on the relationship between Hausa-speaking Christians and their Muslim neighbors in the book. Despite being disjointed, the narrative effectively showcases multiple dimensions of Christianity in Northern Nigeria.

Shankar successfully brings to light the "forgotten" history of Christianity in Northern Nigeria and unravels the traditional historical narratives that give credit to the policies of the colonial administration for the current state of the region. Her engaging biographical vignettes reveal a complex world of religious interactions that defined the development of both Christianity and Islam in the region. At a modest 209 pages, Shankar's timely book offers a fresh perspective on the nature of conversion and what it entails, as well as Christian-Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria. *Who Shall Enter Paradise? Christian Origins in Muslim Northern Nigeria, ca. 1890-1975* is an impressive addition to an already vast literature about Christianity in Africa.

D. Dmitri Hurlbut, *Boston University*

Mary-Alice Waters. 2013. *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*. Atlanta, GA: Pathfinder Press. 144 pp.

Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own is an excellent read for both the academic and layperson. Mary-Alice Waters' socialist passion is truly felt in these accounts of Cuba's campaign to defend the country of Angola against Zaire (now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo), South Africa, and their benefactors circa 1975 until 1991. The multiple sections of this book contain excerpts from key decision makers such as Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and Nelson Mandela; as well as accounts from generals of the Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, the Cuban Five, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. It details how former President Fidel Castro used centralized command and decentralized execution to devastate some of the best militaries on the African continent during the struggle known as "Operation Carlota." "The mission was named Operation Carlota, after a slave woman from the Triunvirato sugar mill near Matanzas, Cuba, known as 'Black Carlota'. Armed with a machete, she led a slave rebellion in 1843 that extended to a number of plantations in the province. She was captured and drawn and quartered by the Spanish colonial troops" (p. 17). The name of this operation captured the spirit that the Cuban people wished to exhibit in every aspect of this conflict. It also revealed how Castro used motivated Cuban nationalists known as Internationalists to build relationships with the African people creating a movement utilizing the basic principles of the Sun Tzu's *Art of War* to defeat their adversaries on the African continent from November 1975 until May 1991.

This book seems to suggest that the Internationalist cadre helped the Cuban people gain a better understanding of the pulse of the Angolan people. Waters states that, "[a]n additional 50,000 internationalist volunteers carried out various civilian responsibilities" (p. 15). The dynamic group of volunteers integrated into the various aspect of Angola life to understand

and assist them throughout their initial development. This relationship was symbiotic and benefitted not only Angolans, but also the Cubans through the fulfillment of a sense of assisting a brother country against a racist imperialist power. This sense seemed to validate the character of the Cuban people. However, a heart and mind campaign was only part of Cuba's plan. One of the true skill-sets of Castro, according to the book, was his skill as a strategist.

Castro directly supervised and utilized his understanding of the basic principles of the *Art of War* to defeat his adversaries. Numerous accounts in this book posit that Castro was intimately involved in every aspect of the battles that occurred in Angola, like the battle was being fought in Cuba. History paints former President Castro as a strategist, and this book seems to emphasize that a fundamental aspect of his strategies consist of understanding and effectively utilizing Sun Tzu's military treatise. The premise of one of Sun Tzu's principles was that if one knows themselves and their opponent, then one was better suited to defeat the enemy.¹ This principle was displayed through Cuba's deployment of internationalists as well as military forces, thereby gaining a better understanding of the actors fighting in this conflict. Another principle that Castro demonstrated from the *Art of War* was one of the five factors from which victory is known: "[o]ne who recognizes how to employ large and small numbers will be victorious."² This was evident in the different approaches that Fidel had from that of the Soviets in the employment of the Angolan forces.⁸ Therefore, this book lays out in plain English how Castro reinvigorated the motivation of the Cuban people to encourage internationalists to build relationships with the African people, as well as how he utilized his skills as a strategist to defeat numerical superior militaries on the African continent.

In conclusion, this book captures the passion of Mary-Alice's writing on Cuba's assistance of Angola against several strong militaries on the African continent in what is known as "Operation Carlota." It reveals how Castro used over 50,000 motivated internationalist in civilian and military roles to perform a heart and mind campaign. It also divulges how Castro directly worked battles using the basic principles of the "Art of War" to defeat the adversaries.

Notes

1. Ralph D. Sawyer (trans.) and Mei-chun L. Sawyer. 1996. *The Complete Art of War: Sun Tzu/Sun Pin* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press): 32.
2. Ibid., p. 52.

Raymond Cohen, *Independent Scholar, Waldorf, Maryland*
Justin Cohen, *Southern Maryland Community College, Waldorf, Maryland*

Michael J. Willis. 2014. *Politics and Power in the Maghreb: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco from Independence to the Arab Spring*. New York: Oxford University Press. 410 pp.

In this medium-sized compendium, Willis explains the political complexion and dynamics of the three states of the central Maghreb by examining the roles played by various actors such as the military, political parties, and Islamic movements. Each of the nine chapters presents a logical and coherent sequence of historical developments that describe the continuities and

changes to power and politics in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco from independence to the present in a very striking distinctive manner.

Willis discusses the imprint of history and independence in the Maghreb in Chapter One, noting that the earliest political organization in north-west Africa emerged with the tribal Berber population (p. 11), until the arrival and distortion of the said political organization by the nomadic Arabs in early seventh century AD; the “Hilian” invasions and widespread Arabization and emergence, from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, of the Almoravids (*al-murabitum*) and Almohads (*al-muwahhidun*); and the Ottoman empire’s paramountcy in the seventeenth century. There is no discussion, though, regarding the volume or quality of religious practices and/or composition and adhesiveness of the believed “Christian” Berbers prior to these “great” distortions.

Instead of discussing post-independence state building in Chapter 2, Willis began with a rehearsal of the independence period discussed earlier (p. 38). Willis depicts the new consolidated post-independence political arrangements thus: Tunisia—“Party State” and “Presidential Monarchy;” Algeria—moderate constitutional reforms; Morocco—“Dominant Monarchy.” The distinctive roles of the military in the Maghreb, which are illustrative of the differentiations in the political evolution of the three states, received appropriate attention from Willis. In Algeria, the armed wing of the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN), i.e., the ALN, was firm, explicit, and embodied state power. In Morocco, the *Forces Armées Royales* (FAR) became a palace tool in a bid to make it more inhibitive and less prone to infiltration by nationalist and leftist elements and ideas (p. 83). In Tunisia, Bourguiba purged the military of distrusted rural anti-colonial militia (*fellagha*) and instilled loyalist and apolitical ethos. Other *coup d’états* were also highlighted in Chapter 3.

A reader is also informed of the nature and character of party coloration and leanings in the Maghrebi states. Willis dwells on how Morocco had operated a “controlled,” “manipulated,” and “delegitimized” multi-partyism, and the constitutional exclusivity granted to the so-called “ruling” single parties in Tunisia and Algeria, which continued even after the emergence of multi-party systems in both countries in 1980s (p. 151). Much of 1980s showed that Tunisia’s reformist ideology reflected in the agenda of the mainstream *Movement de la Tendance Islamique* (MTI) and al-Nahda. In Algeria, the nationalists’ populist and insurrectionist legacy were reproduced in the FLN and *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS). In Morocco, *Al-Adl wal Ihsan*’s operation and Abdesalam’s challenge to the monarchy had echoes of the Moroccan kingship style. Willis made little or no obvious clarification and distillation of the ideological-political mix of Islamist movements, political parties, religion, and state ideology, since the key players are blanketed in overlapping roles in their electioneering outlooks and insurrectionist dispositions.

Willis digs into the core of the Berber identity, which constitutes over 95 percent Sunni of the Malekite rite at independence. The politicization of the Barber identity and Arabianization of some parts of the Maghreb brought sharp divisions and dissensions along lines of power struggle in the states of region (p. 206). An insight on politics and economics shades light on predominant state domination in economic activities (i.e., socialism) but with significant elements of economic reforms and liberalization (p. 259). Willis insists that regional relations in Maghreb have swung between conflict and cooperation.

One fascinating legacy of this book is the provision of the introduction and conclusion as separate themes in the beginning and end of the work. The method of chapter by chapter documentation at the end of the book is quite inspiring and exemplary. However, one wonders why Chapters 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8 had separate end-of-chapter conclusions, whereas Chapters 2, 4, 6, and 9 lacked similar desirable treatment. Even though Willis conducted a descriptive analysis, the empirical strength of this book could have been more significant if the discussion had been corroborated with charts, graphs, or tables. Hence, a researcher on the subject matter may be disappointed as the book merely leaves him with 'uncertain' historical accounts which other scholars may have interpreted differently.

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Anika Wilson. 2013. *Folklore, Gender and AIDS in Malawi*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan. 190 pp.

How does a society learn to live with a newly endemic disease? How does the emergence of a new disease change cultural imagery, and patterns of intimacy, and social relations in affected countries? In *Folklore, Gender and AIDS in Malawi*, Anika Wilson examines folktales, rumors, gossip, and informal advice around sex, disease, and marriage in Malawi, a country that has been undergoing a generalized HIV/AIDS epidemic for thirty years. Such folk narratives she argues are "propositions about the world" (p. 160); a world in which HIV/AIDS has become a "normalized" part of everyday life.

Wilson discusses data gathered through guided interviews and journal entries made by fieldworkers who recorded stories that they overheard going about their day-to-day lives. The journal method has its flaws, which Wilson acknowledges, but it yields rich store of tales—some hilarious, many heartbreaking—told in voices that are often absent from global health conversations, those of health project "beneficiaries." She uses tales of romantic rivalry, marital discord, phantom rape, and imaginary new diseases to explore people's anxiety around HIV/AIDS and to examine how communities have incorporated public health messages into existing belief systems and behavior patterns.

Wilson begins the book with a solid introduction to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Malawi that provides an insightful discussion of how NGOs, government bodies, and the media have worked together to create a closed "alliance of elite voices" (p. 24) that has little dialogue with the concerns or common understandings of the local population. Each subsequent chapter discusses a particular informal folk narrative that emerges from the data.

Chapter Two examines advice on marriage and sexuality shared among women and their family members and the first recourse for women needing help in their marriages and relationships. Advice, she finds, is highly valued as "medicine" among community members. Women in these advice narratives define marriage as a test of "endurance" but they define this is not just passive acceptance of their sometimes difficult situation but also often an active, stubborn fight to save troubled relationships and to protect themselves and their children from HIV infection. Although women have few "avenues of agency" (p. 71) they call on elders to mediate marital conflicts and use "love medicine" to change male behavior. HIV/AIDS haunts

the stories, with concerns about infection overlaying worry of heartbreak, sexual jealousy, and fears of financial abandonment.

Another strategy used by women to secure relationships, discussed in Chapter Three, involves direct aggression against romantic rivals through physical attacks and the labeling of rivals as prostitutes, foreigners, and “AIDS widows” who threaten the health of the community. Here we see the high-risk populations described by HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns layered onto existing understandings of “good” and “bad” women.

Throughout the book’s stories, women are seen simultaneously as dangerous reservoirs of disease and most vulnerable victims. In Chapter Four, Wilson discusses rumors about the mythical, fatal, incurable disease *mphutsi*, which causes maggots to infest its victims’ genitals. *Mphutsi* is thought to mainly affect women who have too much sex, particularly with foreigners. While the popularity of the *mphutsi* rumors represent an “obvious critique of a ‘certain type of woman’” (p. 118) Wilson also sees the stories of this highly visible disease as a form of nostalgia for the earlier phase of the HIV/AIDS epidemic when it was clear who was infected and who was not.

The final chapter focuses on stories of phantom rape, which, Wilson argues, can be viewed as communal reactions to intense media campaigns on domestic abuse, and intergenerational sex. Media coverage she argues created a “moral panic” which, in turn, generated stories of abuse and helplessness that “suggest anxiety over the pervasiveness of intimate partner violence” (p. 141).

As is being increasingly realized in the wake of recent infectious disease outbreaks in West Africa (Ebola) and the United States (measles) both fueled and hampered by rumor and conspiracy theory, public health interventions are improved when practitioners pay attention to common understanding of disease among ordinary people, and are aware of the multiple sources of information that people use to make sense of their lives. By examining folk narratives public health professionals can better understand the community concerns about health initiatives and the creative, often hidden ways in which they manage their disease risk. For illustrating this point in lucid and accessible prose and for illuminating the richness and complexity of the lives of people who are targeted by public health initiatives, this book makes a valuable contribution.

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Elizabeth Wrangham. 2013. *Ghana During the First World War: The Colonial Administration of Sir Hugh Clifford*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press. 310 pp.

Elizabeth Wrangham has achieved the core goal of historical scholarship; she has presented ample evidence that complicates and challenges previously held notions about the past. In particular, *Ghana During the First World War* presents a much more nuanced view of British colonial administration than is often presented by more sweeping narratives of colonialism, often drawn from dependency theory. A major strength of this work is its focus. By examining a single colonial administration at a pivotal moment in the history of the Gold Coast Colony,

Wrangham presents a detailed and impeccably researched view of how Sir Hugh Clifford attempted to navigate the major economic and social shifts caused by World War I.

The first section of the book, which includes the introduction and first three chapters, establishes critical context by giving an overview of the economy and British administrative plans before the war, as well as Clifford's assumption of the post of governor in 1912. These chapters clearly establish the author's core theme, "While the British colonial government in the Gold Coast was authoritarian, it was certainly not all powerful" (p. xviii). Through her impressive engagement with primary records of Clifford's tenure in power, section I of Wrangham's monograph gives numerous examples of how the administration's development plans were often limited by a complex matrix of directives from London, African demands (chiefs, traders, new elites), attempts to maintain the colonial staff's morale, and global economic realities.

The bulk of the book, Chapters 3-9, target the various effects World War I had on the Gold Coast Colony and Clifford's time as governor. In this section, Wrangham not only demonstrates how the monocrop export economy centered on cocoa made the colonial enterprise more difficult, but also how African farmers and miners expressed dissatisfaction with the diminishing returns caused by the war. For Wrangham, evaluations of complaints made to officials in private and in public forums like *The Gold Coast Nation* and *Gold Coast Leader* were proof "...that the African population of the Gold Coast were not passive subjects but active players, in a wide range of roles, in this challenging economic context" (p. 115). In particular, a good deal of Chapter 7 exhibits how local chiefs and cocoa farmers often advocated for road construction as a way to advance their own economic interests. Of course, examples like this confound the conventional view that Africans had no say in colonial development projects.

Section II concludes (Chapters 8-9) by describing how the war exposed colonial rule's limitations, weaknesses and biases in the Gold Coast. Specifically, Wrangham gives us critical insight into how Clifford's leadership during the war exacerbated regional disparities that still play a key role in Ghana today. As the author succinctly summarized, "The interwar period was to see the role of the Northern Territories confirmed, in the eyes of the colonial administration, as little more than a labor reserve for the south" (p. 207). While Wrangham's engagement of official records clearly shows that Clifford often attempted to balance the concerns of various interests throughout the colony, this section gives readers a sense of his crude pragmatic side as well.

The book's conclusion gives us a sense of the importance of the figure and time period studied in the monograph. Summarizing the impact of World War I and the economic hardships and social tensions that accompanied it, Wrangham writes:

The First World War was a decisive period- as has been pointed out, at the halfway point in the Gold Coast's colonial history. There was no return, in 1919, to the relative prosperity and promise of 1913. These were years of dislocation and hardship for all people in the territory (in varying degrees), but above all they showed the inadequacy of colonial rule. This in turn led to African frustration and disillusionment and, increasingly impatience, criticism and organized protest (p. 260).

Ghana During the First World War gives us unprecedented, expansive insight into the mind of Sir Hugh Clifford, a man at the center of it all. Elizabeth Wrangham has written an excellent study that is accessible and presents a second-to-none engagement of primary sources that greatly enhances our understanding of a key figure in West African history. All scholars interested in British colonial administration of West Africa or the political history of the Republic of Ghana should read this important monograph from an experienced and rightfully distinguished scholar.

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